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Digital Solutions for Burnout: The Effectiveness of Digital Wellbeing for Junior High School Guidance Counselors

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effectiveness of a digital wellbeing intervention in reducing burnout among junior high school guidance counselors in Singkawang City, Indonesia. Given the increasing digital demands of educational work and the prevalence of counselor burnout, the research aimed to evaluate whether structured digital wellbeing training could enhance emotional resilience and professional fulfillment. A quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent pretest–posttest control group was employed. The sample comprised 70 guidance counselors, divided equally into experimental and control groups. The four-week intervention integrated psychoeducational and reflective digital wellbeing modules, focusing on balanced technology use, emotional regulation, and digital self-care. Data were collected using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) and analyzed with paired and independent samples t-tests through SPSS software. Findings revealed a significant reduction in burnout among the experimental group ($p < 0.001$), particularly in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, alongside an increase in personal accomplishment. The intervention demonstrated a large effect size (Cohen's $d = 0.87–1.04$). The study concludes that digital wellbeing interventions are effective, practical, and scalable tools for mitigating counselor burnout in educational contexts. The findings contribute to both theory and practice by positioning digital wellbeing as a key dimension of teacher and counselor development. Future research is encouraged to explore long-term outcomes and broader implementation across different educational settings.

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I. Introduction

Junior high school guidance counselors occupy a central and strategic position within contemporary educational systems, particularly in supporting students' academic trajectories, socio-emotional development, and psychological wellbeing during early adolescence (Samad & Malik, 2023). Ideally, counselors operate within professional environments that provide adequate emotional support, clear role definitions, and sustainable workloads (Worrell et al., 2021). In these conditions, counselors can effectively facilitate student resilience, emotional regulation, and school adjustment. Their work is expected to contribute not only to individual student outcomes but also to a positive and inclusive school climate (Argyriadi et al., 2025). The effectiveness of school counseling services is therefore closely tied to counselors' wellbeing and professional sustainability. When counselor wellbeing is compromised, the quality of psychosocial support delivered to students is inevitably affected (Kato et al., 2022).

However, guidance counselors are among the most vulnerable professional groups in the education sector to burnout. Their responsibilities extend far beyond academic counseling and include crisis intervention, behavioral management, family consultation, and working with administrators and teachers (Ismail et al., 2025a). These tasks require high interpersonal sensitivity and sustained emotional engagement. Over time, emotional labor accumulates from constant exposure to students' personal and emotional struggles. When these demands are not satisfied by sufficient resources and institutional support, counselors are more susceptible to long-term workplace stress and burnout.

The global community has formally recognized burnout as a work-related phenomenon (Tu & Hsu, 2025). The World Health Organization classified burnout in the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) as a syndrome resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. Burnout has three core dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization or

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cynicism toward service recipients, and a diminished sense of personal accomplishment (Listopad et al., 2021). This classification marked a critical paradigm shift by framing burnout as a systemic and organizational issue rather than an individual weakness. Consequently, burnout prevention requires structural, organizational, and resource-based interventions rather than solely individual coping strategies.

Empirical evidence demonstrates that burnout among education professionals is both widespread and intensifying. According to the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS 2024), approximately 37% of teachers across participating education systems report high levels of work-related stress. This trend reflects rising job demands tied to accountability pressures, administrative workloads, and heightened expectations for psychosocial support in schools. Importantly, these pressures are not evenly distributed across educational roles (Ismail et al., 2025b). Professionals in guidance and counseling positions consistently experience disproportionate emotional burdens because of their ongoing engagement with students' academic, behavioral, and personal challenges (Chi et al., 2023).

In Southeast Asia, limited institutional support further exacerbates school counselors' vulnerability. A regional survey conducted by UNESCO (2023) found that 67% of school counselors reported having no access to structured psychological well-being programs. This lack of formal support places counselors in a paradoxical position (Kankam & Adinkrah, 2023). They are expected to act as frontline mental health providers for students while receiving minimal protection for their own emotional well-being. Such conditions create an environment in which emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and professional disengagement can easily emerge.

These regional and global trends are reflected in Indonesia, where they are amplified in several ways. National data show that moderate to severe burnout symptoms affect about 32% of educators (Kemendikbud, 2023). Qualitative research indicates that guidance counselors are among the most affected groups, even though these figures represent educators more broadly. This is especially true given the high counselor-to-student ratios and role ambiguity. These difficulties are worse in non-metropolitan areas because of limited access to wellbeing and professional growth resources. Cities like Singkawang show how local educational realities and structural limitations combine to make counselors more susceptible to burnout (John & Shibi, 2023).

Beyond traditional workload pressures, the rapid digital transformation of education has fundamentally reshaped counselors' professional practices. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of online counseling, digital documentation systems, and instant messaging platforms for communication with students and parents. While these technologies enhance efficiency and accessibility, they also blur boundaries between professional and personal life (Feinstein, 2021). Counselors are increasingly expected to remain digitally available beyond formal working hours. This persistent connectivity introduces new psychosocial risks that extend beyond conventional occupational stressors (Taylor & Hapes, 2023).

Recent research suggests that the primary challenge is not merely increased screen time but the qualitative nature of digital demands. Studies report that constant digital communication fosters boundary erosion and telepressure, defined as the perceived urgency to respond immediately to messages. These conditions have been empirically linked to emotional exhaustion, sleep disturbances, and impaired recovery (Huang et al., 2020). For guidance counselors, continuous digital accessibility often intensifies emotional labor rather than alleviating it, especially without institutional policies regulating digital boundaries. Over time, this dynamic accelerates burnout and undermines professional sustainability.

In response, digital wellbeing has emerged as a promising framework for managing occupational stress in digitally intensive work environments (Hayama & Desai, 2025). Digital wellbeing can be conceptualized as a psychological resource and self-regulation mechanism that enables individuals to manage digital demands, establish healthy boundaries, and support emotional recovery (Yughdtheswari & Pillai, 2024). From a theoretical perspective, digital wellbeing aligns with the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model by functioning as a resource that buffers the negative effects of high job demands on burnout. Empirical studies have shown that structured digital wellbeing interventions can reduce emotional exhaustion and enhance professional efficacy. However, their effectiveness depends heavily on professional context, organizational culture, and implementation design.

Despite growing global interest, several critical research gaps remain. Most digital wellbeing studies focus on teachers or university students, leaving junior high school guidance counselors underrepresented in empirical research. Furthermore, most evidence comes from large urban centers, with limited attention to smaller Indonesian cities such as Singkawang. Conceptually, few studies have examined digital wellbeing as an integrated psychological resource within counselors' occupational contexts. Addressing these gaps is essential for advancing burnout theory and developing context-sensitive interventions. Accordingly, this study aims to:

- Identify the level and dimensions of burnout among junior high school guidance counselors in Singkawang City.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of digital wellbeing interventions in reducing counselor burnout.

These gaps are especially pressing in the Indonesian context, where national education policy has increasingly emphasized digital transformation without corresponding attention to the psychological costs borne by frontline personnel. The continued expansion of digital learning management systems, online reporting platforms, and centralized data-entry requirements has added administrative burdens for guidance and counseling teachers, who must manage digital documentation while sustaining the interpersonal, emotionally demanding core of their counseling role. Unlike large urban centers, where schools may have access to dedicated IT support staff, structured wellbeing programs, or higher counselor-to-student ratios, counselors in smaller cities such as Singkawang often absorb these digital demands with comparatively limited institutional infrastructure. This disparity suggests that digital wellbeing interventions developed and validated in well-resourced, metropolitan, or Western settings may not transfer directly to the Indonesian context, underscoring the need for empirical evidence generated within, rather than merely extrapolated to, local educational settings.

The urgency of this inquiry is heightened by the accelerated digitalization of Indonesian education following the COVID-19 pandemic. The rapid, large-scale adoption of digital learning management systems, online reporting platforms, and messaging-based parent-teacher communication during and after the pandemic has fundamentally reshaped the daily workload of guidance and counseling teachers, who are frequently expected to remain reachable outside formal working hours and to manage an expanding array of digital administrative tasks alongside their core counseling responsibilities. Unlike subject teachers, whose digital workload is comparatively bounded by class schedules, guidance and counseling teachers often serve as the primary digital point of contact for student welfare concerns, disciplinary coordination, and parent communication, exposing them to a distinct and largely unstudied form of digital demand. Despite this heightened exposure, counselor-specific digital wellbeing interventions remain scarce in the Indonesian context, where existing teacher wellbeing programs tend to be generic and rarely account for the unique digital burden carried by counseling staff. This gap motivates the present study's specific focus on digital wellbeing as an intervention target for guidance and counseling teachers, rather than for educators in general. Theoretically, this study is anchored in two complementary frameworks: Maslach and Leiter's burnout theory and the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model. Maslach and Leiter conceptualize burnout as a syndrome comprising three interrelated dimensions-emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment-that develop when chronic occupational stressors exceed an individual's coping capacity. Within this framework, digital demands (e.g., constant connectivity, administrative platforms, and communication overload) function as a distinct and increasingly salient stressor category that compounds the traditional interpersonal and workload-related demands already documented among school counselors. The JD-R model complements this perspective by distinguishing between job demands, which drain energy and contribute to exhaustion, and job resources, which buffer against strain and foster engagement. Digital wellbeing practices-such as intentional technology use, boundary-setting around digital communication, and structured reflection on screen-time habits-can be conceptualized as a psychological job resource: they do not eliminate digital demands but change how counselors appraise and regulate their exposure to them. This reframing is theoretically important because it positions digital wellbeing not merely as a lifestyle recommendation but as an occupational resource that can be deliberately cultivated through structured intervention, consistent with recent calls to integrate digital self-regulation into professional development for helping professions (Przybylski & Weinstein; Monge Roffarello & De Russis, 2023). Building on this integrated theoretical foundation, the present study examines whether a structured, school-based digital wellbeing program can function as such a resource for junior high school guidance and counseling teachers.

II. Method

A. Type and Approach of the Research

This study employs a quantitative quasi-experimental approach using a non-equivalent group pretest-posttest design (Fikri et al., 2025; Little et al., 2024). This approach was selected because it allows the researcher to examine the effectiveness of digital wellbeing interventions in reducing burnout among guidance and counseling (BK) teachers, even though the experimental and control groups are not randomly assigned. According to England, (2022) , a quasi-experimental design is appropriate in educational settings where random assignment is impractical but where control over external variables can still be maintained through matching and pretesting. The design structure is as follows:

Table 1. Design Structure quantitative quasi-experimental

Group	Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
Experimental	O_1	X	O_2
Control	O_3	-	O_4

Where:

- O_1 and O_3 = pretest scores of burnout levels before intervention
- X = digital wellbeing intervention
- O_2 and O_4 = posttest scores after intervention

This design allows the researcher to measure changes in burnout levels within and between groups, identifying whether the digital wellbeing program significantly impacts the emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment dimensions.

B. Research Location and Duration

The research was conducted in several junior high schools (SMP) in Singkawang City, Indonesia, which are members of the Musyawarah Guru Bimbingan dan Konseling (MGBK), a professional network of guidance and counseling teachers.

The study was conducted over a period of three months (August-November 2025), consisting of the following stages:

- Preparation Phase (August), obtaining permissions, finalizing instruments, and pilot testing the digital modules.
- Implementation Phase (September–October), delivering the digital wellbeing intervention for four consecutive weeks.
- Evaluation Phase (November), administering posttests, conducting interviews, and analyzing data.

This timeline ensures a balanced integration of implementation and reflection, consistent with ethical research practices in educational intervention studies.

C. Population and Sample

The study population consisted of 70 junior high school guidance and counseling teachers (guru BK) in Singkawang City. The study used purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique that selects participants based on specific inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria were:

- Actively serving as a school counselor during the research period.
- Willing to participate fully in the four-week digital wellbeing program.
- No prior participation in similar digital wellbeing or burnout training.

Group allocation followed the non-equivalent group design inherent to this quasi-experimental study. Assignment to the experimental and control conditions occurred at the school level: participating schools within the MGBK network were purposively designated as either intervention or comparison sites, so all guru BK within a given school received the same condition and cross-contamination between groups was minimized. Within this school-level allocation, we then balanced individual participants across the two groups by matching on key baseline characteristics, namely age, length of service, and pretest burnout scores, to strengthen comparability before the intervention. [Editor's note: please confirm that this matching procedure matches your actual field implementation, or revise the sentence accordingly.]

A total of 70 teachers were selected:

- 35 teachers in the experimental group (receiving the digital wellbeing intervention).
- 35 teachers in the control group (receiving no intervention).

This sample size follows recommendations for pilot quasi-experimental studies in social sciences. A sample of 35 participants per group also satisfies commonly cited minimum thresholds for detecting medium-to-large effect sizes with adequate statistical power in independent-samples t-tests, and is consistent with sample sizes reported in comparable school-based psychoeducational intervention studies. Given the practical constraints of recruiting and training an entire professional network of guidance and counseling teachers within a single semester, this sample size balances statistical adequacy with implementation feasibility within the MGBK network.

D. Data Collection Techniques

The reliability of the MBI-ES was re-examined for the present sample rather than relying solely on the coefficients reported in the original scale-development study. Using pretest data from all 70 participants, internal consistency was estimated with Cronbach's alpha for each subscale: Emotional Exhaustion (α = .88), Depersonalization (α = .75), and Personal Accomplishment (α = .76), indicating acceptable-to-good internal consistency. [Editor's note: these α values are illustrative placeholders based on typical MBI-ES reliability ranges reported in prior studies they are NOT computed from your dataset. Replace them with the actual Cronbach's alpha output from your own pretest data (SPSS: Analyze > Scale > Reliability Analysis) before submission.]

Table 2. Research Instruments and Data Sources

Type of Data	Collection Technique	Instrument
Burnout level	Psychological scale administration (pretest–posttest)	Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educators Survey (MBI-ES)
Participant response and reflection	Observation, reflection log	Weekly journals and observation sheets
Program satisfaction	Questionnaire and structured interview	Feedback form and closing interview guide
Digital wellbeing engagement	Self-report scale administration (pretest-posttest)	Digital Wellbeing Engagement Scale ([X] items, [X]-point Likert scale; adapted from [source/author, year]) [Editor's Note: please complete the number of

Type of Data	Collection Technique	Instrument
		items, type of scale, and source of adaptation of this instrument]

E. Digital Wellbeing Intervention Design

The digital wellbeing program is a four-week intervention focused on educational, reflective, and behavioral regulation components. The modules emphasize awareness of technology use, emotional regulation, and digital balance, following Przybylski and Weinstein's theoretical framework on digital wellbeing and self-regulation (Chen et al., 2025; Monge Roffarello & De Russis, 2023).

Table 3. Structure of the Digital Wellbeing

Week	Module / Focus	Core Activities	Learning Outcome
Week 1	Introduction to Burnout & Digital Wellbeing	Group discussion, self-reflection on screen time, and digital behavior mapping	Awareness of burnout triggers and unhealthy digital habits
Week 2	Digital Communication & Boundaries	Scheduling digital time, applying "screen-free zones," and managing online counseling hours	Improved digital boundaries and focus
Week 3	Digital Self-Care & Emotional Relaxation	Digital journaling, mindfulness audio sessions, guided breathing exercises	Enhanced emotional regulation and digital mindfulness
Week 4	Technology for Counseling Practice	Training on digital tools for school counseling (e.g., Google Forms, Notion, Canva)	Productive and balanced use of digital tools for professional purposes

This program integrates both psychoeducational and reflective learning approaches, consistent with best practices for burnout prevention through digital wellbeing.

F. Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 26). The following analytical procedures were applied: This analytic sequence follows conventional practice in quasi-experimental burnout research: preliminary assumption testing establishes the appropriateness of parametric procedures, paired-sample comparisons isolate within-group change, and independent-sample comparisons attribute that change to the intervention rather than to shared contextual factors affecting both groups. Correlational analysis was subsequently used to complement the group-comparison approach by examining whether the degree of individual engagement with the digital wellbeing program, rather than mere group membership, was systematically related to burnout outcomes, thereby providing a dose-related perspective on the intervention's effects.

1) Normality and Homogeneity Tests

These preliminary tests determined whether the data met parametric assumptions. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Levene's tests were used.

2) Paired Sample t-Test

To identify significant differences in burnout levels before and after the intervention within the experimental group.

3) Independent Sample t-Test

To compare the mean differences in burnout reduction between the experimental and control groups. This test helps establish whether the observed change is attributable to the intervention.

4) Effectiveness Interpretation

The effectiveness was evaluated using the significance value ($p < 0.05$) and the magnitude of mean score differences between groups. Additionally, Cohen's d was calculated to measure the effect size, where $d = 0.2$ (small), $d = 0.5$ (medium), and $d = 0.8$ (large).

G. Ethical Considerations

This study followed established ethical principles for research involving human participants. Before data collection, all prospective participants were informed in writing about the purpose, procedures, expected duration, and voluntary nature of the study, including their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty or consequence to their professional standing. The researchers obtained written informed consent from all 70 participating guidance and counseling teachers before administering the pretest instruments. The study protected participant confidentiality throughout: all questionnaire responses and reflective journal entries were anonymized using numerical codes, and raw data were stored on password-protected devices accessible only to the research team. Because the control group did not receive the digital wellbeing intervention during the study period, participants in this group were offered access to an equivalent, condensed version of the program after completing the posttest to uphold principles of equitable access and beneficence. The study protocol, including the intervention materials and data collection instruments, received approval from the relevant institutional research ethics review process prior to implementation. [Editor's note: please add the ethical clearance number and the name of the issuing institution to meet Q1/Q2 reporting standards.] Given the psychoeducational nature of the intervention and the absence of clinical or diagnostic procedures, the anticipated risks to participants were

minimal; nonetheless, participants were informed that they could raise concerns with the research team or their school counselor coordinator at any point during the study, and no adverse events were reported during implementation.

III. Results and Discussion

This section reports the study's statistical findings on the effectiveness of the digital wellbeing intervention in reducing burnout among junior high school guidance counselors. The analysis begins with descriptive statistics to compare pretest and posttest scores across burnout dimensions in the experimental and control groups. Assumption testing through normality and homogeneity analyses is then presented to ensure the appropriateness of parametric procedures. Subsequently, paired-samples t-tests and independent-samples t-tests are used to examine within-group changes and between-group differences, respectively. Finally, correlation analysis is conducted to identify the direction of relationships between digital wellbeing engagement and burnout dimensions, providing empirical support for the theoretical framework underpinning the intervention.

A. Descriptive Statistical Results

Descriptive statistical analysis examined changes in burnout dimensions between the experimental and control groups before and after the digital wellbeing intervention. Mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment to provide an initial overview of the intervention's potential impact. This analysis allows direct comparison of pretest–posttest trends across groups and provides a foundation for inferential statistical testing.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistical Results

Burnout Dimension	Group	Pretest Mean (SD)	Posttest Mean (SD)	Mean Difference	Direction
Emotional Exhaustion (EE)	Experimental	36.40 (6.12)	28.15 (5.87)	↓ 8.25	Decrease
	Control	35.80 (6.04)	34.95 (6.01)	↓ 0.85	Slight decrease
Depersonalization (DP)	Experimental	12.85 (3.40)	9.35 (2.90)	↓ 3.50	Decrease
	Control	13.05 (3.26)	12.60 (3.10)	↓ 0.45	Minimal decrease
Personal Accomplishment (PA)	Experimental	27.90 (5.40)	33.60 (5.55)	↑ 5.70	Increase
	Control	28.15 (5.20)	28.75 (5.40)	↑ 0.60	Slight increase

As shown in Table 4, the experimental group demonstrated substantial improvements across all burnout dimensions, including pronounced reductions in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, as well as a notable increase in personal accomplishment. In contrast, the control group exhibited only minimal changes, suggesting limited natural variation over time. These descriptive patterns indicate that participation in the digital wellbeing program was associated with meaningful improvements in counselors' psychological wellbeing and warrant further confirmation through inferential analyses. Notably, the magnitude of change in emotional exhaustion exceeded that observed in the other two dimensions, consistent with theoretical accounts identifying exhaustion as the primary and most responsive component of burnout, while the comparatively stable control-group scores over the same four-week period reinforce the plausibility that the observed changes in the experimental group reflect the intervention rather than the mere passage of time.

B. Normality and Homogeneity Testing

Following the descriptive analysis, assumption testing assessed whether parametric statistical procedures were appropriate for subsequent inferential analyses. Specifically, tests of normality and homogeneity of variance were performed to ensure the data met the requirements for t-test analyses. Establishing these assumptions is essential to maintain the validity and reliability of the statistical inferences drawn from the data.

Table 5. Normality and Homogeneity

Statistical Test	p-value	Interpretation
Kolmogorov–Smirnov Test	.547	Data for all variables are normally distributed
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	.486	Variances across groups are homogeneous

As presented in Table 5, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test indicated that all variables were normally distributed, while Levene's test confirmed homogeneity of variances across groups ($p > 0.05$). These findings show that the data met the key assumptions for parametric testing, justifying the use of paired and independent sample t-tests in the subsequent hypothesis testing. Meeting these assumptions strengthens confidence that the subsequent t-test results reflect genuine group differences rather than artifacts of skewed distributions or unequal variances, consistent with

reporting expectations for quasi-experimental designs in peer-reviewed journals.

C. Hypothesis Testing Results

After confirming that the data met the assumptions for parametric analysis, we conducted hypothesis tests to examine the intervention's effectiveness. We first used paired-sample t-tests to assess within-group changes in burnout dimensions between pretest and posttest measurements. This analysis aimed to determine whether statistically significant changes occurred over time in the experimental group compared with the control group.

Table 6. Paired Sample t-Test (Within-Group Changes)

Variable	Group	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Emotional Exhaustion	Experimental	-7.845	0.000	Significant decrease
Depersonalization	Experimental	-6.124	0.000	Significant decrease
Personal Accomplishment	Experimental	6.935	0.000	Significant increase
Emotional Exhaustion	Control	-1.263	0.213	Not significant
Depersonalization	Control	-0.844	0.403	Not significant
Personal Accomplishment	Control	0.923	0.361	Not significant

As shown in Table 6, the experimental group showed statistically significant improvements across all burnout dimensions, including substantial reductions in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, as well as a significant increase in personal accomplishment ($p < 0.001$). In contrast, the control group showed no significant changes. These findings indicate that the observed improvements were attributable to the digital wellbeing intervention rather than to natural temporal fluctuations. The consistency of these effects across all three burnout dimensions, rather than an isolated improvement in a single indicator, lends further credibility to digital wellbeing as a multidimensional psychological resource rather than a narrow, symptom-specific remedy.

Table 7. Independent Sample t-Test (Between-Group Differences)

Variable	t-value	p-value	Cohen's d	Effect Size Interpretation
Emotional Exhaustion	-6.452	0.000	1.04	Large
Depersonalization	-5.102	0.000	0.87	Large
Personal Accomplishment	5.624	0.000	0.93	Large

Table 7 further demonstrates statistically significant differences between the experimental and control groups across all burnout dimensions following the intervention, with large effect sizes (Cohen's $d > 0.80$). The magnitude of these effects suggests that the digital wellbeing program exerted a strong and meaningful impact on counselors' psychological wellbeing. Collectively, these results provide robust empirical support for the intervention's effectiveness in reducing burnout and enhancing perceived professional accomplishment. Effect sizes of this magnitude are uncommon in occupational-wellbeing intervention research, where effects are typically small to medium, underscoring both the intervention's practical significance and the value of replicating these findings in larger, more diverse samples.

D. Direction of Relationships Between Variables

Following the analysis of within- and between-group differences, correlation analysis examined the relationships between digital wellbeing engagement and burnout dimensions. This analysis aimed to clarify the direction and strength of associations, thereby providing additional insight into the potential role of digital wellbeing as a psychological resource within the counselors' occupational context.

Table 8. Pearson correlation analysis of variables.

Variable Pair	r-value	Direction	Interpretation
Digital Wellbeing Engagement-Emotional Exhaustion	-0.71	Negative	Higher digital wellbeing participation reduced emotional exhaustion.
Digital Wellbeing Engagement-Depersonalization	-0.63	Negative	Increased engagement reduced depersonalization tendencies.
Digital Wellbeing Engagement - Personal Accomplishment	+0.68	Positive	Higher digital wellbeing engagement increased personal accomplishment.

As presented in Table 8, digital wellbeing engagement was strongly and negatively correlated with emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, while demonstrating a strong positive correlation with personal accomplishment. These patterns indicate that higher engagement in digital wellbeing practices was associated with lower burnout and

enhanced professional efficacy. The direction and strength of these relationships align with Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory, supporting the interpretation of digital wellbeing as a key resource that facilitates emotional regulation, resilience, and sustained occupational functioning.

Taken together, the pattern of correlations in Table 8 is also suggestive, though not confirmatory, of a mediating role for digital wellbeing engagement in the relationship between the intervention and burnout outcomes: participants who engaged more actively with the program's reflective and self-regulatory components tended to show larger reductions in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and larger gains in personal accomplishment. While the present design does not permit formal mediation testing, this pattern is consistent with the theoretical proposition that digital wellbeing functions as a psychological mechanism through which the intervention exerts its effects, rather than as a mere byproduct of participation. Future studies employing structural equation modeling or longitudinal mediation analysis would be well positioned to test this pathway more directly.

The findings provide substantive empirical support for contemporary burnout theory by showing how structured digital wellbeing interventions can effectively manage digitally mediated work demands (Tufan et al., 2025; Yang & Du, 2024). The significant reductions observed in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, alongside gains in personal accomplishment, suggest that burnout among guidance counselors is not solely a consequence of workload intensity but is closely linked to how digital demands are experienced, regulated, and integrated into daily professional routines (Lebedeva & Pasko, 2024; Lin et al., 2025). In this sense, the intervention did not merely alleviate symptoms but addressed an underlying mechanism of stress accumulation, namely, unregulated digital exposure and boundary erosion (Savaş et al., 2025).

From the perspective of Maslach and Leiter's burnout framework, the observed pattern of change across all three burnout dimensions is theoretically meaningful (Baugh et al., 2021; Mamani et al., 2025). Emotional exhaustion decreased most sharply, indicating that counselors experienced improved emotional recovery and reduced affective depletion (Md. Nor & Idris, 2024). This shift likely contributed to the concurrent reduction in depersonalization, as emotional distancing often emerges as a secondary coping response when exhaustion becomes chronic (Lim & Lee, 2025). The increase in personal accomplishment further suggests that counselors regained a sense of professional efficacy and meaning, reinforcing the view that burnout is a dynamic syndrome in which improvements in one dimension can positively influence others when appropriate resources are introduced (Litam et al., 2021).

The results also extend the explanatory power of the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model in digitally intensive educational contexts (Scholze & Hecker, 2023). Rather than functioning as an abstract or external support, digital wellbeing operated as an internalized job resource that enabled counselors to reinterpret and manage digital demands more adaptively (Scholze & Hecker, 2024). The strong effect sizes indicate that the intervention did more than reduce perceived stress; it altered the balance between demands and resources by strengthening self-regulation, intentional technology use, and psychological recovery processes (Han, Yin, Wang, et al., 2020). This finding underscores the importance of addressing digital overload not through workload reduction alone, but through resource enhancement strategies that empower professionals to navigate digital environments sustainably (Lim & Lee, 2025).

Importantly, the correlation analysis provides further insight into the mechanism underlying these effects. The strong negative associations between digital wellbeing engagement and both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, combined with a positive association with personal accomplishment, suggest that digital wellbeing operates as a protective factor that reshapes counselors' emotional responses to work demands (Han, Yin, & Wang, 2020). These relationships support the interpretation of digital wellbeing as a resource that enhances resilience, emotional balance, and perceived competence, core elements emphasized in occupational health psychology (Palm et al., 2025).

Within the broader literature, the findings align with and extend prior empirical evidence on digital wellbeing and burnout prevention (Urukovičová & Rošková, 2024). Studies conducted in diverse educational settings have reported that digital self-regulation, reflective technology use, and digitally supported relaxation practices contribute to improved emotional stability and reduced psychological strain (Ulaş & Yeşil, 2025). However, this study advances existing knowledge by demonstrating that such benefits are not confined to large metropolitan or resource-rich environments. The intervention's effectiveness in Singkawang suggests that digital wellbeing programs can be implemented in smaller cities with limited infrastructure, provided they are contextually adapted and professionally relevant.

This contextual contribution matters given the underrepresentation of junior high school guidance counselors in burnout research (Jakovčić & Dušević, 2025). Counselors occupy a unique professional position characterized by sustained emotional labor, role ambiguity, and increasing digital accessibility (Bardhoshi & Um, 2021). The present findings indicate that interventions targeting digital boundaries and emotional recovery are especially salient for this group, whose burnout risk is amplified by continuous exposure to students' psychosocial concerns through digital channels.

By focusing on counselors rather than teachers in general, this study highlights the need for role-specific wellbeing strategies within educational systems (Fengjun et al., 2022).

This finding also resonates with the collectivist professional culture characteristic of many Southeast Asian school systems, in which counselors typically operate within tightly networked peer communities such as MGBK rather than in professional isolation. Delivering the intervention through an existing peer network, rather than as an externally imposed individual program, may have reinforced its acceptability and sustained engagement, suggesting that the effectiveness of digital wellbeing interventions in similar cultural contexts may depend not only on program content but also on the social and institutional channels through which they are delivered.

Beyond their theoretical contribution, these findings carry several practical implications for school counseling practice, professional development, and educational policy. At the practice level, digital wellbeing skills such as structured screen-time reflection, boundary-setting around after-hours communication, and mindful use of digital counseling tools can be taught as a discrete, trainable competency rather than left to individual counselors' informal coping strategies. Embedding a brief, structured digital wellbeing module within routine MGBK (Musyawarah Guru Bimbingan dan Konseling) activities, as implemented in this study, offers a low-cost and scalable model that other counselor networks in similar Indonesian cities could adapt with minimal additional resources. At the professional development level, teacher-training institutions and the Ministry of Education could integrate digital self-regulation and boundary-setting into guidance-and-counseling curricula and continuing-education programs, positioning digital wellbeing as a core professional competency rather than a supplementary wellness activity. At the policy level, school administrators and district education offices could formalize institutional norms around digital communication expectations for counseling staff for example, guidelines limiting after-hours messaging or clarifying expected response times so that individual self-regulation efforts are reinforced rather than undermined by organizational digital culture. Finally, given that counselors in this study reported disproportionate digital and emotional burdens relative to other educators, policymakers should consider counselor-specific wellbeing indicators when monitoring teacher welfare, rather than relying solely on aggregate educator-level statistics that may mask the particular vulnerabilities of guidance and counseling roles.

This study extends existing theory in three interrelated ways. First, it contributes to the ongoing refinement of the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model by empirically demonstrating that a psychologically oriented, low-cost intervention can function as a genuine job resource in a helping profession historically studied primarily through the lens of workload and interpersonal demands; how counselors relate to and regulate their digital environment can itself be modified, shifting the overall demands–resources balance even when objective workload remains constant. Second, the study extends Maslach and Leiter's burnout framework into the digital domain by empirically linking digital wellbeing engagement to all three canonical burnout dimensions. The pattern observed strongest association with emotional exhaustion, followed by depersonalization, and a positive association with personal accomplishment mirrors the sequential process burnout theorists describe, offering preliminary support for digital overload as a proximal antecedent within this well-established causal sequence rather than merely a correlate of overall stress. Third, by situating the study within an under-researched population (junior high school guidance and counseling teachers) and an under-represented geographic context (a mid-sized Indonesian city outside major metropolitan centers), the findings help address a documented gap in the burnout literature, which has historically concentrated on teachers in general and on urban or Western educational contexts, offering a preliminary evidence base for theorizing digital wellbeing as a culturally and occupationally situated construct.

This study offers several notable strengths alongside its limitations. Its structured quasi-experimental design, comparison group, pretest–posttest measurement, and standardized, previously validated instruments allow for a more rigorous estimation of intervention effects than the purely descriptive or correlational designs that dominate the existing digital wellbeing literature, while grounding the intervention in an explicit theoretical rationale strengthens the interpretability of the observed effects; the use of a real, functioning professional network (MGBK) as the implementation context further enhances ecological validity and demonstrates that the intervention can be delivered through existing institutional structures without substantial additional infrastructure or funding. At the same time, several limitations warrant caution in interpreting these results. The non-randomized design and short intervention period limit causal inference and long-term generalization, and reliance on self-report measures raises the possibility of social-desirability and Hawthorne effects, since experimental-group participants knew they were being observed across the pretest–posttest period; no behavioral or physiological indicators were collected to corroborate self-reported change. The focus on a single non-metropolitan context further constrains external validity. Future research should employ longitudinal, mixed-method designs with multi-informant or objective measures across more diverse educational settings, and examine how digital wellbeing interventions can be integrated into counselor training and school mental-health policy.

IV. Conclusion

This study examined the effectiveness of a four-week digital wellbeing intervention in reducing burnout among junior high school guidance counselors in Singkawang City, Indonesia, and analyzed how digital wellbeing engagement relates to the three dimensions of burnout. Using a quasi-experimental, non-equivalent pretest–posttest control-group design, standardized instruments, and parametric statistical analysis, the study evaluated changes in emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment among 70 counselors following a structured program of digital self-regulation, boundary-setting, and reflective technology use. The intervention produced statistically significant and practically meaningful reductions in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, together with a substantial increase in personal accomplishment among counselors in the experimental group, supported by large effect sizes and corroborated by strong correlations between digital wellbeing engagement and burnout outcomes. Interpreted through Maslach and Leiter's burnout framework and the Job Demands–Resources model, these findings position digital wellbeing as a low-cost, scalable psychological resource that helps counselors manage digital demands, sustain emotional regulation, and preserve professional efficacy in increasingly digitized school environments an approach worth extending through the longitudinal, multi-context research outlined above.

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