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MUHASABAH AS OPERATIONAL ISLAMIC MINDFULNESS IN SUPPORTING STUDENTS' SELF-REGULATED LEARNING AMID SOCIAL MEDIA DISTRACTION

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi muhasabah sebagai praktik operasional Islamic mindfulness dalam mendukung self-regulated learning (SRL) siswa pada pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) di tengah distraksi media sosial. Fokus penelitian meliputi bentuk distraksi, pemahaman dan praktik nyata muhasabah oleh siswa, manifestasi SRL, mekanisme regulatif muhasabah, serta faktor pendukung dan penghambat kontekstualnya. Penelitian kualitatif ini menggunakan desain Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) di kelas 9D SMP Al-Hadiid yang melibatkan tiga siswa sebagai informan utama idiografik, serta ditriangulasi dengan informasi kontekstual dari guru PAI, guru BK, dan orang tua sebagai informan pendukung. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi kelas, dan analisis dokumen jurnal refleksi, kemudian dianalisis melalui pencatatan awal idiografik, pengembangan tema emergen, dan sintesis lintas kasus. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa distraksi media sosial, yang dipicu oleh notifikasi, konsumsi video pendek, dan tekanan respons cepat teman sebaya, menyebabkan time slip, terfragmentasinya alur belajar, dan melemahnya keterlibatan reflektif dalam PAI. Siswa mempraktikkan muhasabah sebagai jeda sadar spiritual-metakognitif untuk mengaudit niat (niyyah), manfaat belajar, dan tanggung jawab moral (amanah). Proses ini mendukung SRL melalui mekanisme siklikal lima tahap: kesadaran akan gangguan, evaluasi niat/manfaat, penahanan impuls digital, pemulihan fokus, dan perbaikan strategi belajar. Pembiasaan refleksi oleh guru dan kesepakatan keluarga memperkuat proses ini, sedangkan ekspektasi kelompok teman sebaya dan Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) menjadi hambatan dominan lintas informan karena memicu beban pikiran (cognitive preoccupation) meskipun gawai tidak diakses secara fisik. Lebih dari sekadar menghubungkan dua konsep, studi ini menyumbangkan model spiritual-metakognitif berbasis bukti empiris yang menerjemahkan evaluasi diri Islam klasik ke dalam kerangka regulasi kelas yang operasional.

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Keywords

muhasabah; Islamic mindfulness; self-regulated learning; social media distraction; Islamic Religious Education

ABSTRACT

This study explores muhasabah as an operational practice of Islamic mindfulness in supporting students' self-regulated learning (SRL) in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) amid social media distractions. It examines forms of distraction, students lived understanding and practice of muhasabah, manifestations of SRL, the perceived regulatory mechanism of muhasabah, and contextual supporting and inhibiting factors. Employing an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) design in Grade 9D of SMP Al-Hadiid, this study involved three students as primary idiographic informants, triangulated with contextual insights from a PAI teacher, a guidance and counseling (BK) teacher, and a parent. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis of reflection journals, and analyzed via idiographic initial noting, emergent theme development, and cross-case synthesis. Findings indicate that social media distractions, triggered by notifications, short-form video consumption, and peer pressure for rapid responses, induce time slip, fragmented learning flow, and weakened reflective engagement in PAI. Students practice muhasabah as a conscious spiritual-metacognitive pause to audit intention (niyyah), learning utility, and moral accountability (amanah). This process supports SRL through a five-stage cyclical mechanism: awareness, evaluation of intention/benefit, restraint of digital impulse, refocusing, and improvement of learning strategy. While teacher-guided reflection and family rules reinforce this practice, peer-group expectations and Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) constitute the dominant barrier across informants, generating cognitive preoccupation even without physical phone access. Beyond linking existing concepts, this study contributes an empirically grounded spiritual-metacognitive model that translates classical Islamic self-examination into an operational classroom regulation framework.

A. INTRODUCTION

Social media has become part of the relational and life ecosystem of adolescents and is difficult to separate from learning activities at school (Kasperski and Blau 2023). Continuous access patterns, ranging from notifications and instant messages to short videos, create a situation of digital distraction in which students' attention easily shifts from learning tasks to digital stimuli (Fournier et al. 2026; Martin et al. 2018). Among students, various studies show that problematic use of social media and smartphones is associated with impaired concentration, changes in study habits, reduced academic engagement (Landa-Blanco et al. 2024), and difficulties in time management (Abdullah et al. 2024; Pereira et al. 2024; Sunday et al. 2021). Students' self-control and smartphone use have likewise been linked to differences in academic performance (Troll et al. 2021). Conceptually, however, digital interference in learning spans a spectrum that should not be conflated: ordinary digital distraction refers to momentary attentional shifts triggered by external technological cues (Martin et al. 2025); Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) represents a socio-emotional anxiety of being excluded from peer interactions that preoccupies cognitive working memory (Al-Furaih and Al-Awidi 2021); problematic social media use denotes a recurring pattern of functional deterioration in daily responsibilities (Carbonell-Colomer et al. 2025); and smartphone addiction reflects severe compulsive dependency (Sunday et al. 2021). Therefore, the issue of social media in education should not be viewed merely as a matter of access duration; it needs to be examined through how momentary triggers and socio-emotional pressures disrupt learning functions and the quality of student engagement.

This problem becomes more complex in Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*, hereafter PAI). PAI requires not only mastery of cognitive concepts but also the internalization of values, the habituation of moral conduct, and the ability to reflect on life experiences within a framework of faith. Unlike purely procedural tasks, value internalization in PAI demands sustained contemplative attention (*hudhur al-qalb*) and emotional presence so that religious teachings can be connected to personal moral conscience. When students' working memory is repeatedly fragmented by notification alerts, algorithmic short-form videos, or FoMO-driven anxiety over peer group chats, cognitive processing remains at a surface level, thereby severing the reflective continuity required to internalize spiritual and ethical lessons. On the one hand, social media can be a source of Islamic learning and a space for *da'wah*; on the other hand, it can become a distractor that erodes depth of attention when it is not accompanied by critical awareness and the ability to regulate oneself (Bujangga et al. 2025; Mujahidin et al. 2025).

Preliminary findings in Grade 9D of SMP Al-Hadiid show that digital distraction appears in forms close to students' learning experiences. Student A stated, "During PAI lessons I intend to listen, but as soon as my phone vibrates I immediately think about the notification; in the end I open it for a moment, and then it becomes long." Student B added, "Once I open TikTok, I feel like I only want to watch one video, but suddenly there are many. By the time I realize it, the PAI lesson has moved on to another topic." Meanwhile, Student C said, "Sometimes I open a chat not because it is important, but because I am afraid of being left out. If I do not reply quickly, I keep thinking about it even while the teacher is explaining." These three preliminary accounts show that distraction is not merely the behavior of opening an application; it also involves a break in the flow of thought, *time slip*, and a socio-emotional burden that disrupts learning.

In the educational literature, the ability to set goals, monitor processes, control strategies, and evaluate learning outcomes is explained through the concept of self-regulated learning (SRL). SRL encompasses metacognitive, motivational, behavioral, and affective processes that enable students to learn more consciously and independently across cyclical phases of forethought, performance, and self-reflection (Panadero 2017). Strengthening SRL has become increasingly important in the digital ecology because students face competing smartphone stimuli that demand sustained attentional control (Deng et al. 2024; Hartley et al. 2020), including within Islamic and prophetic value-based learning environments (Afifi et al. 2022). Although SRL in technology-mediated settings has been widely examined through instructional design innovations, such as immersive virtual reality (Ader et al. 2025) and flipped learning in the Indonesian context (Fakhruddin et al. 2024), fewer studies address how students regulate in-class social media distractions directly. Developing SRL also cannot be limited to general advice; it needs to be embedded in learning routines, reflection, and the social support of schools and families (Gamby and Bauer 2022; Solichin et al. 2021).

Beyond metacognitive skills, self-regulation is also related to the ability to recognize impulses and delay responses. Mindfulness studies show that awareness of one's own state can help individuals pause automatic responses, manage emotions, and return to their main goals (Yusainy et al. 2019; Sarshar and Kian-Ersi 2020). However, while secular mindfulness and Islamic spiritual practices share attentional regulation mechanisms, they differ fundamentally in ontological and axiological orientation. Secular mindfulness emphasizes non-judgmental, present-moment awareness and non-reactive observation of stimuli (Yusainy et al. 2019). Conversely, within the broader umbrella of Islamic mindfulness (Aldbyani 2025; Aldbyani and Al-Harbi 2026; Sadiq and Ahmad 2026), self-awareness is

anchored in *tawhid* and moral accountability before Allah. Within this Islamic tradition, *tafakkur* refers to contemplative reflection on divine creation and meaning; *muraqabah* denotes the continuous inward vigilance of realizing that one is watched by Allah (Isgandarova 2019; Nurhakim and Rahman 2025); and *muhasabah*, which is rooted in QS. Al-Hashr [59]: 18 and classical Sufi ethics (Al-Muhasibi 1990; Al-Ghazali 2005), functions specifically as deliberate self-accounting, auditing one's intentions (*niyyah*), weighing the moral utility of actions, and committing to behavioral rectification. *Muhasabah* has also been applied in guidance and counseling settings through Qur'anic *muhasabah* techniques (Khoiriyah and Mu'is 2024). Thus, *muhasabah* is not conceptually identical to secular mindfulness; rather, it operates as a distinct evaluative-spiritual mechanism within the framework of Islamic mindfulness that integrates conscious pausing with normative self-appraisal in the learning process.

A number of earlier studies have examined adolescents' social media use, digital distraction, SRL, mindfulness, and Islamic education. Abdullah et al. (2024) examined social media addiction among secondary school students; Pereira et al. (2024) mapped adolescents' social media use; Carbonell-Colomer et al. (2025) highlighted indicators of problematic social media use; Martin et al. (2025) synthesized the causes, consequences, and prevention of digital distraction; and Sunday et al. (2021) reviewed the effects of smartphone addiction on learning. In the field of Islamic education, Bujangga et al. (2025) and Mujahidin et al. (2025) showed both the opportunities and the challenges of social media as a source of Islamic learning. In the field of mindfulness, Aldbyani et al. (2025) explained the relationships among mindfulness, problematic smartphone use, SRL, and digital detox, while Isgandarova (2019), Aldbyani (2025), Aldbyani and Al-Harbi (2026), and Sadiq and Ahmad (2026) enriched the framework of Islamic mindfulness. Norman et al. (2025) further linked Islamic mindfulness to self-regulation and academic success among Generation Z, and Rejeki and Hakim (2025) systematically reviewed mindfulness-based Sufism interventions.

The proximity of these themes shows that research on social media, mindfulness, and self-regulation has developed, but systematic comparison of these studies reveals three specific limitations. First, quantitative studies (e.g., Abdullah et al. 2024; Aldbyani et al. 2025; Troll et al. 2021) treat social media use and mindfulness primarily as correlational variables measured through psychometric scales, leaving the micro-level subjective process of how students pause and negotiate digital impulses in real classroom moments unexplored. Second, studies in Islamic education (Bujangga et al. 2025; Mujahidin et al. 2025) focus predominantly on social media as an instructional resource rather than investigating how in-class digital distractions erode spiritual reflection during PAI lessons. Third, while conceptual reviews (Aldbyani and Al-Harbi 2026; Norman et al. 2025) have linked Islamic mindfulness to academic regulation broadly, they have not operationalized how *muhasabah* specifically bridges spiritual intention auditing (*niyyah*) and moral trust (*amanah*) with the metacognitive phases of SRL among junior high school students.

In the context of PAI, addressing this gap is important because the success of learning cannot be separated from the quality of students' attention and their inner readiness. Students who are physically present in the classroom are not necessarily present reflectively if their minds are tied to digital conversations or the stream of short content. Therefore, *muhasabah* needs to be examined not only as a moral concept but also as an operational regulative practice that helps students read their own condition, weigh the consequences of their digital actions, and make more conscious learning decisions. Methodologically, the study uses Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) so that students' subjective

experiences can be captured idiographically in depth rather than merely measured through the duration of device use (Robinson and Williams 2024; Smith et al. 2021).

By integrating *muhasabah* into Zimmerman's cyclical model of SRL (Panadero 2017), this study advances existing SRL frameworks by explaining how spiritual intention evaluation (*niyyah*), impulse restraint, self-monitoring, and strategic adjustment interact in classroom practice. Based on this background, this study addresses five explicit research questions: (1) How do junior high school students experience social media distraction and its impact during PAI learning? (2) How do students understand and operationalize *muhasabah* as a practice of Islamic mindfulness? (3) How are students' SRL processes manifested in PAI learning? (4) Through what mechanism does *muhasabah* support students in managing digital distraction and regulating their learning? and (5) What ecological factors support or inhibit the implementation of *muhasabah* in supporting learning regulation? The results are expected to offer a theoretical contribution to the development of PAI, SRL, and Islamic mindfulness studies, as well as a practical contribution for PAI teachers, guidance and counseling teachers, schools, and families in designing reflective habituation that is relevant to the digital ecology of adolescents.

B. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) design. This design was chosen because the study focuses on how students make sense of their lived experience of being distracted by social media in PAI learning and how they practice *muhasabah* as a self-regulation strategy. IPA is relevant to educational research because it places participants' lived experience as the primary source of understanding while allowing researchers to conduct detailed idiographic interpretation (Robinson and Williams 2024; Smith et al. 2021). The phenomenological approach also allows complex social phenomena to be understood from the participants' perspective rather than merely as symptoms measured from the outside (Alhazmi and Kaufmann 2022).

The study was conducted in Grade 9D at SMP Al-Hadiid, a private Islamic-affiliated junior high school in Indonesia characterized by a curriculum that integrates religious character habituation with permitted, task-based smartphone use during lessons. Crucially, prior to data collection, the PAI teacher in Grade 9D had already introduced and habituated brief oral and written *muhasabah* reflections at the end of weekly lessons for one semester; therefore, *muhasabah* represented an existing pedagogical routine rather than an artificial intervention newly introduced by the researchers. There were six informants in total: three students (coded A, B, and C) as primary idiographic informants, and one PAI teacher (GPAI), one guidance and counseling (BK) teacher (GBK), and one parent (OT) as supporting contextual informants (Table 1).

Following institutional research authorization from the principal of SMP Al-Hadiid, written parental consent, and student assent, the three student informants were identified and recruited through a two-stage purposive screening process in collaboration with the PAI and BK teachers. First, the researchers reviewed preliminary classroom observation notes and existing student reflection logs in Grade 9D; second, three students were invited because they demonstrated high verbal reflectiveness and represented distinct, recurring distraction profiles in the classroom: notification-triggered attention shifting (Student A), *time slip* from short-form content (Student B), and peer-group FoMO pressure (Student C). In strict adherence to the idiographic principle of IPA, which prioritizes analytical depth over sample size (Smith et al. 2021), only the three students were treated as primary phenomenological participants whose lived experiences formed the core thematic

structure. Conversely, the PAI teacher, the BK teacher, and the parent were positioned analytically as contextual triangulation sources to verify behavioral consistency and map the school and family regulatory ecology.

Data were collected between January and March 2026 through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document study to strengthen source and method triangulation (Cena et al. 2024). First, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted in a private counseling room between 20 and 28 February 2026, lasting 35 to 50 minutes per informant. All interviews were audio-recorded with participant permission and transcribed verbatim in Indonesian before being translated into English. The interview guide was structured around the five research questions, featuring open-ended questions such as: *(1) "Can you describe what happens in your thoughts and actions when your phone vibrates or when you open social media during a PAI lesson?" (2) "When practicing muhasabah, what questions do you ask yourself and how does that relate to your religious beliefs?" (3) "How do you set goals, manage time, and control yourself when facing digital distractions?"* and *(4) "What conditions at school, among friends, or at home make it easier or harder for you to practice muhasabah?"* Second, non-participant classroom observations were conducted across four PAI lesson sessions (2 × 40 minutes per session) in February 2026, covering instructional segments before, during, and after smartphone-assisted tasks and end-of-lesson reflections. Third, the document study analyzed three specific sets of artifacts: (a) the school's written classroom smartphone-use regulation, (b) the PAI teacher's instructional module (*Modul Ajar*) containing reflective prompts, and (c) nine weekly entries from Students A, B, and C's post-lesson *muhasabah* reflection sheets.

Data analysis followed the seven idiographic stages of IPA (Smith et al. 2021): verbatim transcription, repeated reading, exploratory initial noting (descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual comments), identification of emergent themes, clustering of superordinate themes within each case, idiographic case-by-case examination, and cross-participant pattern interpretation. To preserve the uniqueness of each student's experience before identifying general patterns, the researchers completed the full coding cycle for Student A before bracketing those findings to analyze Student B and Student C independently. Transcripts from the supporting informants (GPAI, GBK, OT) were coded in a secondary matrix to provide contextual corroboration without overriding the students' phenomenological voice. Table 2 illustrates how raw interview statements were transformed into initial notes, emergent themes, and superordinate themes.

Analytical credibility was strengthened through source and method triangulation, peer debriefing with two Islamic education colleagues, an audit trail of coding memos, and member checking conducted in early March 2026, wherein simplified thematic summaries were reviewed and confirmed by Students A, B, and C as well as the PAI teacher. Because the authors are PAI academics, a reflexive journal was maintained throughout the analysis to bracket normative theological assumptions; this ensured that students' lapses into distraction were interpreted empathetically as genuine psychological struggles rather than judged through a moralistic lens. Research ethics were strictly upheld through institutional permission from SMP Al-Hadiid, signed parental informed consent, student assent, pseudonym coding (A, B, C, GPAI, GBK, OT), and empathetic, non-judgmental interviewing techniques that normalized digital temptation so students felt safe disclosing their habits without fear of academic penalty or social stigmatization.

Table 1. Research Informants and Data Focus

Code	Role	Purposive criteria	Analytical status & Data focus
A	Grade 9D student	Attends PAI lessons and experiences notification-based distraction.	Primary IPA informant: Notification triggers, conscious pause, intention audit, and recovery of focus.
B	Grade 9D student	Experiences *time slip* caused by short-form content or social media.	Primary IPA informant: Time management, evaluation of phone use, and strategies for limiting distraction.
C	Grade 9D student	Experiences peer-group pressure and the demand for quick responses.	Primary IPA informant: FoMO, peer pressure, delaying responses, and self-control.
GPAI	PAI teacher	Teaches PAI in Grade 9D and habituates learning reflection.	Contextual informant: Learning strategies, phone-use rules, and classroom *muhasabah*.
GBK	BK teacher	Guides students' self-regulation and digital habits.	Contextual informant: Guidance on delaying responses and managing notifications.
OT	Parent	Supervises phone use and study habits at home.	Contextual informant: Phone-use agreements and family support.

Source: Field research data, 2026

Table 2. Example of IPA Analytical Progression from Raw Transcript to Superordinate Theme

Raw Interview Statement	Exploratory Initial Noting (Descriptive, Linguistic, Conceptual)	Emergent Theme	Superordinate Theme
"When my phone buzzes during PAI, I try to stop and ask myself, 'Am I opening my phone to study, or just to look around?' If it's just idle curiosity, I feel *rugi* (at a loss) because seeking religious knowledge is worship." (Student A)	*Descriptive:* Student pauses upon vibration and questions motive. *Linguistic:* The term *"rugi"* evokes spiritual and academic loss. *Conceptual:* Shift from automatic impulse to intentional self-audit anchored in *niyyah* and *amanah*.	Conscious pause and spiritual audit of digital intention	*Muhasabah* as Operational Conscious Pause and Digital Action Audit
"Once I open TikTok, I feel like I only want to watch one video, but suddenly there are many. By the time I realize it, the PAI lesson has moved on to another topic." (Student B)	*Descriptive:* Loss of temporal tracking during short-video viewing. *Linguistic:* "Only one... suddenly many" highlights algorithmic pull. *Conceptual:* Temporal distortion (*time slip*) severs instructional continuity.	Algorithmic *time slip* and broken learning flow	Ecological Nature of Social Media Distraction
"Sometimes I open a chat not because it is important, but because I am afraid of being left out. If I do not reply quickly, I keep thinking about it	*Descriptive:* Compulsive replying driven by social anxiety. *Conceptual:* Internalized peer norms and FoMO generate cognitive preoccupation even without active phone use.	FoMO-driven cognitive preoccupation and peer pressure	Ecological Nature of Distraction & Inhibiting Factors

even while the teacher is explaining." (Student C)

Source: Researchers' IPA analytical audit trail, 2026

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Findings

1. Social Media Distraction Is Ecological in Nature

The first finding shows that social media distraction is not a simple individual act but is shaped by a technological, psychological, and social ecology. Notifications are the initial trigger that moves students' attention from the teacher to the phone. Student A stated, "During PAI lessons I intend to listen, but as soon as my phone vibrates I immediately think about the notification; in the end I open it for a moment, and then it becomes long" (Interview, 24 February 2026). Distraction also arises through the consumption of short-form content. Student B said, "Once I open TikTok, I feel like I only want to watch one video, but suddenly there are many. By the time I realize it, the PAI lesson has moved on to another topic" (Interview, 24 February 2026). In this study, *time slip* is defined specifically as an acute distortion of temporal awareness induced by continuous algorithmic scrolling during a task, wherein a student loses track of elapsed classroom minutes, distinguishing it from general time-management difficulties, which involve broader failures in scheduling study hours outside class. In addition, pressure for quick responses from peer groups leaves students mentally burdened even when the phone is not always opened. Student C explained that fear of missing out (FoMO) on conversations kept the student's mind fixed on the chat while the teacher was explaining, noting: "Even when my phone is inside my bag, if I know my friends are discussing something in the group, my head stays restless until I check it" (Interview, 24 February 2026). This pattern shows that social media distraction affects three things: a disrupted learning flow, the emergence of *time slip*, and weakened reflective engagement in PAI learning (Figure 1).

Classroom observation data corroborate the students' narratives and confirm that switching to irrelevant applications occurred in actual learning situations rather than merely as a hypothetical risk. During an observation on 18 February 2026, when the PAI teacher instructed students to use their smartphones to search for Qur'anic verses and commentary related to the PAI topic, most students initially opened their browsers; however, within three to four minutes, several students, including Student B and Student C, were observed switching screens to check incoming WhatsApp messages, view status updates, and scroll through short videos before quickly returning to the browser tab when the teacher walked toward their desks. The PAI teacher (GPAI) confirmed this classroom dynamic: "When I allow phones for searching PAI material, the first five minutes are productive, but once a notification banner pops up at the top of their screen, their eyes and minds immediately drift away from the religious text we are discussing" (Interview, 25 February 2026). This shows that digital devices occupy an ambivalent position: they can support learning when directed, but they also open gaps for distraction when goal control weakens. Importantly, as shown in the revised Figure 1, these three triggers (notifications, short-form content, and peer pressure) do not form a rigid linear sequence, but operate as parallel, converging ecological drivers that induce *time slip*, FoMO preoccupation, and disrupted learning flow, ultimately eroding reflective depth in PAI.

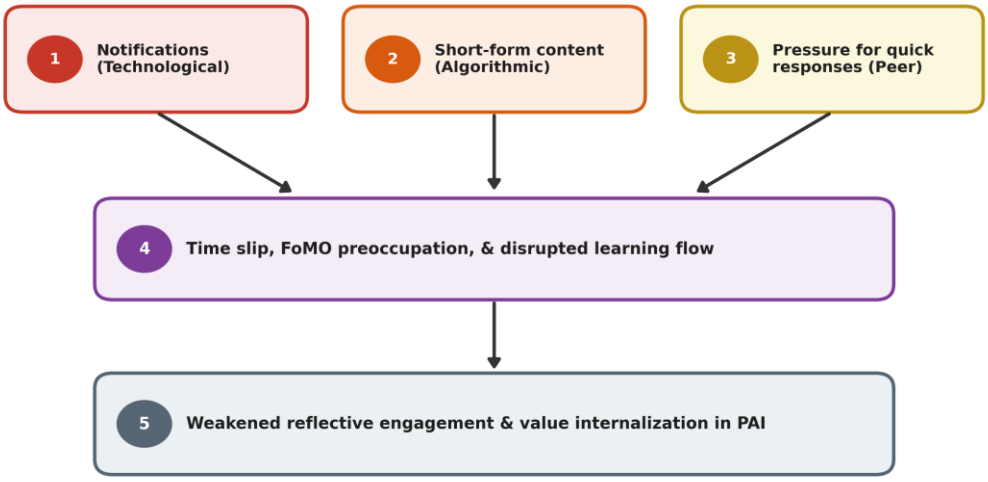


Figure 1. The converging ecological triggers and impacts of social media distraction in PAI learning

2. Muhasabah Is Understood as a Conscious Pause and a Spiritual Audit of Digital Actions

The second finding shows that students understand *muhasabah* as a simple and operational form of self-evaluation. *Muhasabah* is not understood merely as a normative term but as a conscious pause to assess the intention (*niyyah*), benefit (*manfa'ah*), and consequences of digital actions. Student A explained that when the phone rings, the student tries to stop and ask, "Am I opening my phone to study, or just to look around?" If the answer is merely idle curiosity, the student feels at a loss (*rugi*) and returns to listening to the teacher. Student B used a similar question: "What did I open my phone for just now? Was it important?" These reflective questions function as a quick audit that helps students hold back automatic responses to notifications. In PAI lesson observations, the teacher also reinforced this practice by reminding students that phones may only be used to look up material and that they should ask themselves whether the device is being used for learning or for following a momentary desire.

What distinguishes the students' practice of *muhasabah* from ordinary secular self-monitoring is its explicit grounding in religious intention (*niyyah*), moral trust (*amanah*), and awareness of Allah's presence (*muraqabah*). Specifically, the feeling of *rugi* (loss) expressed by the students encompasses both wasted academic opportunities and a sense of spiritual accountability. Student A elaborated: "In PAI, we learn that seeking knowledge is worship (*ibadah*). When I secretly scroll social media while the teacher explains, I feel *rugi* not only because I miss the exam material, but because I broke my *niyyah* and betrayed the *amanah* of my parents and Allah who gave me this study time" (Interview, 24 February 2026). This spiritual anchoring is actively scaffolded by the PAI teacher (GPAI), who stated: "At the start and end of lessons, I remind them that their smartphone is an *amanah*. In our brief *muhasabah*, I ask them to check their *niyyah lillahi ta'ala*, whether their fingers moved for learning or just following momentary *hawa nafsu* (desire)" (Interview, 25 February 2026). Nevertheless, the data also reveal a clear distinction between students' conceptual understanding of *muhasabah* and their consistent behavioral practice: while all three informants clearly articulated the spiritual meaning of *muhasabah*, they candidly admitted that their execution remained fluctuating, succeeding when they felt calm and alert, but occasionally lapsing when fatigued or when peer group chats became intense.

3. Students' SRL Appears in Goals, Control, Time, and Monitoring

Mapped onto Zimmerman's cyclical SRL framework (Panadero 2017), students' self-regulated learning in PAI appears in four main forms spanning the *forethought*, *performance*, and *self-reflection* phases. First, in the *forethought phase*, students begin to set learning goals before attending PAI lessons, for example by targeting understanding of a particular topic and avoiding irrelevant applications. Second, in the *performance phase*, students try to control themselves by delaying responses to notifications. Student C said that the student had begun to tell themselves, "I'll reply later, after the lesson is over," although this did not always succeed. Third, also within the *performance phase*, students manage time by separating phone-use time from study time. Student B said that the student finishes digital matters first and then turns off the phone or puts it away when studying at night. Fourth, in the *self-reflection phase*, self-monitoring is strengthened by written reflection after lessons. The PAI teacher asks students to write down what they understood, the distractions they experienced, and strategies for improvement in the next meeting.

Triangulation of interviews, observations, and document study clarifies which strategies were teacher-instructed versus independently initiated by students, as well as the boundary between stated intentions and actual behavioral regulation. Post-lesson written self-monitoring was primarily teacher-instructed through the PAI teacher's reflection log. However, document analysis of the nine weekly reflection sheets and classroom observations demonstrated that this external scaffolding stimulated self-initiated behavioral regulation during subsequent lessons. For instance, Student A's reflection sheet (dated 19 February 2026) noted: *"Distraction: class group notification. Muhasabah: not urgent for PAI. Action: activated Do-Not-Disturb mode."* In the subsequent classroom observation (25 February 2026), Student A and Student B were observed independently switching their phones to silent mode and placing them inside their backpacks prior to the teacher's instruction. Conversely, Student C's reflection log (dated 20 February 2026) recorded: *"Distraction: peer group chat vibration. Muhasabah: afraid of missing out, but I must respect the PAI lesson. Plan: mute group chat for 1 hour during class,"* yet classroom observation revealed that Student C still occasionally glanced at the phone screen, demonstrating that all three students exhibit emerging self-monitoring and partial behavioral control rather than fully matured, longitudinal SRL mastery.

4. Muhasabah Supports SRL through a Five-Stage Cyclical Mechanism

Muhasabah helps students manage distraction through five interconnected stages (Figure 2). Inductively derived from the students' step-by-step experiential accounts and reflection logs, the first stage is *awareness* that attention is being diverted. The second is *evaluation of intention/benefit* of the digital action, for example by asking whether a notification needs to be opened right then in light of one's learning *niyyah* and *amanah*. The third is *restraint of digital impulse* to open the application. The fourth is *refocusing* attention back to the teacher, the book, or the learning task. The fifth is *improvement of learning strategy* so that similar distractions do not recur, for example by turning off notifications, using do-not-disturb mode, putting the phone away, or opening the device only when directed by the teacher. Crucially, empirical data indicate that these five stages are not strictly linear or rigid; rather, they operate recursively and dynamically. Stages 1 (awareness) and 2 (evaluation of intention/benefit) frequently occur almost simultaneously within a brief mental pause, and if Stage 3 (restraint of digital impulse) fails, resulting in *time slip*, the student re-enters Stage 1 upon realizing the lapse or during post-lesson written reflection.

Rather than claiming a complete, permanent transformation from external to internal control, these stages illustrate a gradual transitional process in which external pedagogical rules are progressively internalized through *muhasabah*. For example, Student B explained an independently executed strategy at home without parental prompting: "Previously, I only put my phone away if my mother scolded me. Now, after getting used to asking myself whether I feel *rugi* in PAI class, when I need to memorize *dalil* (verses) at night, I voluntarily leave my phone on the living room table before entering my bedroom" (Interview, 24 February 2026). Table 3 presents the operational definitions, empirical evidence, corresponding SRL dimensions, and distinctive spiritual contributions of each of the five stages.

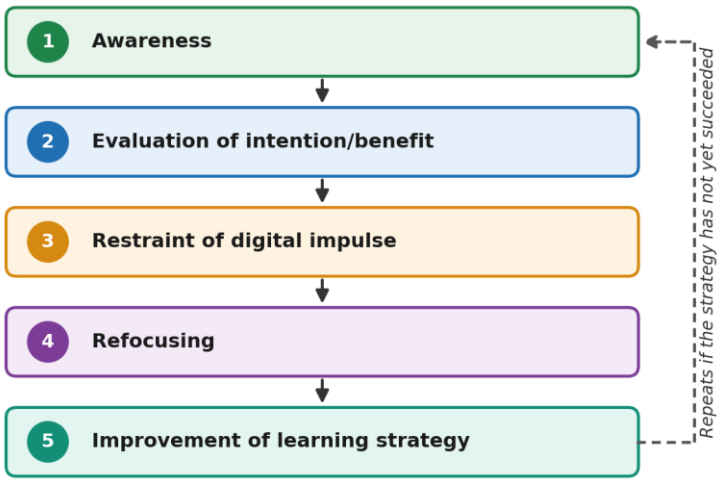


Figure 2. The mechanism of *muhasabah* in supporting self-regulated learning

Figure 2 confirms that *muhasabah* does not run linearly and finish once but forms a repeating cycle. When a learning strategy has not yet succeeded, students return to the stages of awareness and self-evaluation. This cycle makes *muhasabah* relevant to PAI learning, which is continuous, because every meeting gives students an opportunity to improve how they deal with digital distraction.

Table 3. Operational Mapping of the Five-Stage *Muhasabah* Mechanism onto SRL Dimensions

Stage	**Operational Definition**	**Empirical Evidence (Interviews, Observations, Documents)**	**Corresponding SRL Process (Panadero 2017)**	**Distinctive Spiritual Contribution of *Muhasabah***
1. Awareness	Recognizing internal attentional drift or external digital cues in the moment.	*"By the time I realize it, I have watched several videos and stopped listening to the teacher."* (Student B, Interview)	Metacognitive monitoring (Attention tracking in Performance Phase)	Awakening inner consciousness (*basirah*) and divine vigilance (*muraqabah*) during learning.
2. Evaluation of intention/benefit	Auditing the motive (*niyyah*) and learning utility (*manfa'ah*) of accessing the device.	*"I ask: am I opening my phone to study, or just to look around? If idle curiosity, I feel rugi."* (Student A, Interview)	Task value appraisal & standard comparison (Forethought / Performance)	Normative self-accounting (*hisab*) anchored in *niyyah lillahi ta'ala* and guarding *amanah*.
3. Restraint of digital impulse	Inhibiting the automatic urge to	Observation (25 Feb 2026): Student A looked	Volitional & behavioral self-	Spiritual self-restraint (*mujahadah*

	unlock the phone or continue scrolling.	at a vibrating phone, paused, and turned the screen face down without opening it.	control (Inhibitory control in Performance Phase)	*al-nafs*) over momentary desires (*hawa nafsu*).
4. Refocusing	Redirecting cognitive and visual focus back to the PAI lesson or task.	*"I tell myself 'reply later after class,' then I immediately write down what the teacher explains."* (Student C, Interview)	Attention regulation & task execution (Performance Phase)	Restoring presence of heart and mind (*hudhur al-qalb*) in the assembly of knowledge.
5. Improvement of learning strategy	Devising concrete preventive habits to minimize future digital distractions.	Student B's Reflection Log (20 Feb 2026): *"Next meeting plan: turn off social media notifications and keep phone in bag."*	Causal attribution & adaptive strategic planning (Self-Reflection Phase)	Commitment to behavioral self-rectification (*islah*) and continuous moral improvement.

Source: Synthesized from field research data and SRL theory, 2026

5. School and Family Support Reinforces, Peer Pressure Inhibits

The final finding shows that the effectiveness of *muhasabah* is shaped by three distinct contextual factors: institutional school structures, parental home supervision, and peer-group social norms. At the institutional level, the school contributes through phone-use rules, reinforcement of reflection, and guidance from the BK teacher. However, data indicate that school phone-use regulations alone primarily enforce external behavioral compliance (e.g., students hiding screens when teachers pass by), whereas combining rules with classroom *muhasabah* helps students understand the internal moral rationale behind the restriction. The BK teacher (GBK) provided direct evidence of this dynamic: "If we only confiscate phones, students comply out of fear when watched. In BK guidance, we train them to pair notification management with self-reflection so they learn to delay responses consciously" (Interview, 26 February 2026). At the family level, parental supervision provides essential boundary-setting at home. The parent informant (OT) explained: "At home, we do not ban the smartphone entirely because school assignments are shared via WhatsApp. Instead, we agreed that between 7:00 PM and 9:00 PM, the phone stays in the living room unless a specific subject requires it, and we remind our child that study time is their responsibility as a student" (Interview, 27 February 2026).

Conversely, cross-case comparison and contextual triangulation establish peer-group pressure as the dominant inhibiting barrier over purely technical triggers. The basis for this comparative assessment is twofold: first, while technical triggers (notifications and short videos) could be neutralized physically by Students A and B using silent mode or storing phones in bags, peer norms generated internal cognitive anxiety (FoMO) that persisted even without physical contact with the device. Second, this barrier was not isolated to Student C; Student A and Student B also reported feeling pressured to reply immediately during group assignments to avoid social friction, and the BK teacher (GBK) corroborated its prevalence across the student body: "From my counseling records across ninth grade, peer group pressure is the hardest obstacle to break. Over half of the students who struggle with phone distraction in class admit they are terrified of being labeled arrogant, slow, or excluded from their circle if they do not respond to group chats within minutes" (Interview, 26 February 2026). Thus, *muhasabah* becomes effective when it functions as internal awareness supported by external structures in the form of classroom rules, BK guidance, and family habits.

Analysis/Discussion

1. Social Media Distraction as an Interactive Socio-Digital Problem

The findings confirm that social media distraction in PAI learning is not merely a matter of individual lack of discipline. Distraction arises from the interaction among technological design, psychological drives, and social demands. Rather than operating as isolated factors, these three dimensions form a mutually reinforcing ecological loop: platform algorithms generate push notifications and infinite short-form video feeds designed to capture visual attention (Fournier et al. 2026; Martin et al. 2025); these technological cues exploit adolescents' psychological vulnerability to FoMO and immediate gratification (Al-Furaih and Al-Awidi 2021; Rozgonjuk et al. 2019); and peer-group norms institutionalize the expectation of constant digital availability. Crucially, this interaction explains why cognitive distraction persists even when physical phone access is restricted: unaddressed peer pressure and FoMO continue to occupy students' working memory (Wiradhany et al. 2024), breaking the reflection and value internalization that require continuity of attention in PAI.

Accordingly, interventions against distraction need to go beyond a moralistic approach that merely blames students. A moralistic approach risks failing because it does not account for platform design, peer relational pressure, and academic needs that do make use of digital devices. This study shows that PAI can make a distinctive contribution by offering *muhasabah* as a reflective language for managing distraction without rejecting technology entirely. This position is consistent with the demands of contemporary Islamic education, which needs to be adaptive to digital media while remaining critical of their effects on character formation and attention.

2. Muhasabah as Operational Islamic Mindfulness: Theoretical Distinctions

This study extends the discussion of mindfulness by showing that *muhasabah* can work as operational Islamic mindfulness in learning. *Muhasabah* is not merely interpreted as spiritual advice but as a conscious practice of stopping, assessing intention, weighing benefit, and improving action. To maintain theoretical precision, however, *muhasabah* and secular mindfulness must not be treated as fully equivalent constructs. Secular mindfulness generally emphasizes present-moment awareness and non-judgmental, non-reactive attention to passing stimuli (Yusainy et al. 2019; Sarshar and Kian-Ersi 2020). In contrast, *muhasabah* involves deliberate self-evaluation, moral judgment, and teleological accountability. Within the broader framework of Islamic mindfulness, which also encompasses *muraqabah* (continuous awareness of being watched by Allah) and *tafakkur* (contemplative reflection) (Isgandarova 2019; Nurhakim and Rahman 2025; Aldbyani 2025; Aldbyani and Al-Harbi 2026; Sadiq and Ahmad 2026), *muhasabah* operates specifically as the evaluative self-regulatory mechanism of moral self-accounting.

The religious foundation of this construct is rooted in the Qur'anic injunction: *"Yā ayyuhallażīna āmanuttaqullāha waltanẓur nafsum mā qaddamat ligad"* ("O you who have believed, fear Allah and let every soul look to what it has put forth for tomorrow," QS. Al-Hashr [59]: 18), and elaborated in classical Islamic ethics by scholars such as Al-Harith al-Muhasibi (1990) in *Al-Ri'ayah li-Huquq Allah* and Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (2005) in *Ihya' 'Ulum al-Din*, who structured spiritual self-regulation around *muhasabah* (auditing the soul's intentions and actions) and *mujahadah* (striving against lower impulses). In the PAI classroom, this classical foundation translates into three interconnected pillars: *niyyah* (ordering and purifying learning intention), *amanah* (upholding study time and parental support as a sacred trust), and *hisab* (evaluating spiritual and academic loss, or *rugi*). *Muhasabah* can therefore become a culturally congruent approach, that is, one that is

aligned with students' religious culture while remaining relevant to modern learning-regulation needs.

3. Muhasabah Supports the SRL Cycle

From the SRL perspective, *muhasabah* functions as an entry point for awareness, evaluation, impulse control, refocusing, and improvement planning. This cycle is in line with SRL models that emphasize planning, monitoring, control, and self-evaluation (Panadero 2017; Gamby and Bauer 2022). Mapped systematically onto SRL processes: (1) *awareness of distraction* corresponds to metacognitive attention monitoring; (2) *evaluating intention (*niyyah*) and benefit* corresponds to motivational task-value appraisal and standard comparison; (3) *restraining digital impulses* corresponds to volitional and behavioral inhibitory control; (4) *refocusing* corresponds to attentional regulation and strategy execution; and (5) *developing an improvement plan* corresponds to causal attribution and subsequent strategic planning in the self-reflection phase (Table 3).

The distinctive theoretical contribution of integrating *muhasabah* and SRL lies in how the spiritual dimension addresses the motivational limits of purely cognitive self-regulation. Whereas standard SRL models rely primarily on instrumental academic goals (such as grades or task completion), which often falter against instant algorithmic rewards and peer FoMO, *muhasabah* anchors metacognitive monitoring in *niyyah*, *amanah*, and spiritual accountability before Allah. Evaluating intention thus becomes a spiritually meaningful form of self-monitoring, holding back impulses becomes an act of moral self-restraint (*mujahadah al-nafs*), and formulating an improvement plan becomes constructive self-rectification (*islah*). Islamic concepts are thus not merely attached as labels but translated into learning mechanisms that can be observed in students' experience.

4. Implications for PAI Learning in the Digital Era

The practical implication of this study is the need for PAI learning that combines digital literacy, spiritual reflection, and self-regulation strategies. PAI teachers can habituate simple *muhasabah* questions before and after phone use, such as "What am I opening my phone for?", "Does this action help my learning?", and "Which strategy do I need to change?" Practically, PAI teachers can develop a short reflection sheet with three columns: the distraction that arose, the *muhasabah* question, and the improvement plan. BK teachers can strengthen skills in delaying responses, managing notifications, and coping with peer pressure, while families can continue the habituation through agreements on study time and phone use at home (Solichin et al. 2021; Hartley et al. 2020; Deng et al. 2024; Aldbyani et al. 2025).

To ensure sustainable and authentic implementation, several practical safeguards must be observed. First, regarding frequency, the three-column written *muhasabah* reflection activity should be implemented briefly (3-5 minutes) at the end of weekly PAI lessons, paired with a 30-second oral intention reminder (*tajdid al-niyyah*) prior to in-class smartphone tasks, to prevent reflection fatigue. Second, PAI teachers should assess reflective quality formatively based on self-honesty and strategic follow-through rather than grading students on achieving 'zero distraction,' which would otherwise turn *muhasabah* into a compulsory, performative reporting exercise. Third, BK teachers and parents should reinforce the practice through empathetic coaching and mutually agreed home routines rather than excessive, punitive surveillance that erodes trust. Fourth, schools can balance digital access for learning with distraction restriction through 'structured flexibility,' requiring phones to be kept on silent inside bags during reflective lectures while permitting timed access during guided inquiry. Finally, educators must recognize that

excessive moralization or guilt-tripping can undermine the reflective process; *muhasabah* must encourage constructive self-correction (*islah*) and growth rather than shame or self-blame.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that social media distraction in PAI learning is ecological in nature because it is shaped by the interaction of notifications, algorithmic short-form content, and social pressure from peer groups. Empirically, across the three investigated students in Grade 9D of SMP Al-Hadiid, these distractions induced *time slip*, broken learning flow, and FoMO-driven cognitive preoccupation that weakened reflective engagement in PAI. Within this context, students understood and practiced *muhasabah* as operational Islamic mindfulness, a conscious pause to evaluate the intention (*niyyah*), benefit, and moral trust (*amanah*) of digital actions, which supported emerging SRL manifestations in goal setting, impulse delay, time partitioning, and teacher-scaffolded self-monitoring. While PAI reflective habituation, BK counseling, and family agreements reinforced these practices, peer-group expectations for rapid responses remained the dominant barrier.

Theoretically, distinguished from the empirical findings above, this study contributes a five-stage cyclical mechanism, moving from distraction awareness, intention/benefit evaluation, digital impulse restraint, and refocusing to improvement of learning strategy, that integrates Islamic spiritual accountability into established SRL phases. Because the empirical evidence is derived from an idiographic IPA study of three student participants in a single school without pre-post measurement, these findings demonstrate the qualitative role of *muhasabah* in *supporting* self-regulation rather than establishing causal or statistically generalizable improvements in SRL. Future research should employ longitudinal or quasi-experimental mixed-methods designs to examine whether repeated *muhasabah* practices produce sustained, measurable changes in SRL, and investigate how the proposed five-stage mechanism operates across different student characteristics, levels of digital engagement, and school environments.

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