



Gamification in Fiqh Instruction at the Madrasah Level: Mitigating Student Learning Burnout through Digital Interactive Platforms

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Abstract:

This study aims to explore in depth the implementation of a gamification approach using the Wordwall platform in Fiqh instruction and its role in addressing the phenomenon of student learning burnout at the madrasah level. Fiqh instruction, which is often characterized by a normative-textual orientation, tends to rely on conventional lecture-based methods that may trigger psychological fatigue, reduced engagement, and decreased intrinsic motivation among students. This study adopts an interpretive paradigm with a descriptive qualitative case study design to capture the organic dynamics of classroom interaction and the transformation of learning experiences through gamification. Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews with the Fiqh teacher, the madrasah principal, and eighth-grade students, as well as document analysis to triangulate findings. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, involving data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the integration of game elements such as points, levels, challenges, instant feedback, and visual rewards through the Wordwall platform significantly contributes to reducing students' learning burnout. This approach enhances intrinsic motivation, fosters active participation, and alleviates academic stress. Furthermore, gamification transforms the classroom environment from a passive, teacher-centered, and text-dominated setting into a more dynamic, interactive, and student-centered learning space. The study underscores the potential of digital gamification as an innovative pedagogical strategy in Islamic education to create meaningful, engaging, and psychologically supportive learning experiences.

INTRODUCTION

Fiqh education, as one of the core pillars of Islamic Religious Education (IRE), bears the crucial task of shaping students' understanding of religious law while concretely facilitating the practice of worship. Fiqh does not merely convey Islamic legal material cognitively; rather, it serves as a moral guide in shaping students' character, religious attitudes, and daily behavior within society. In the face of the demands of digital transformation, innovation in madrasah classrooms

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has shifted from being merely an option to becoming a theoretical and practical necessity. One of the cutting-edge approaches widely studied globally is gamification the adoption of game elements, mechanics, and aesthetic structures into non-game contexts to stimulate active student engagement. In practice, Wordwall serves as a web-based digital platform that offers a variety of interactive educational game activity templates such as quizzes, matching games, anagrams, and even quiz show formats combining visual appeal with operational flexibility for teachers.

However, empirical evidence from the field reveals a stark functional gap. Fiqh instruction in madrasahs often faces low student engagement due to the dominance of conventional lecture-based methods and limited use of interactive media. The normative, evidence-heavy, and textual nature of Fiqh material has a strong potential to trigger academic burnout if not supported by transformative learning approaches. This phenomenon has led to widespread learning burnout among students at institutions such as MTs Darul Hikmah, characterized by emotional exhaustion, a loss of psychological energy, a decline in intrinsic motivation, and overt apathy toward the process of knowledge transfer. If allowed to persist, this condition not only lowers academic achievement but also undermines the process of spiritual internalization and the formation of religious character among the younger generation. This phenomenon of learning burnout cannot be remedied through conventional curative approaches such as increasing self-study hours or administering repeated remedial exams but rather requires alternative, more adaptive restructuring of the learning experience in the classroom, one of which involves using game mechanics such as rapid point accumulation, tiered challenges, and visual feedback (instant rewards) to transform the rigid atmosphere of Fiqh legal texts into an enjoyable intellectual challenge.

Research on technology-based learning innovations shows that the use of digital media can improve the quality of the learning process. Abuddar and Muali (2025) found that discovery learning in a digital environment can increase student engagement, while Muali and Karlina (2025) demonstrated that digital-platform-based microlearning contributes to improved focus and engagement among students. Furthermore, Muali and Bakron Andre Setiawan (2025) reported that Augmented Reality-based learning can improve students' academic achievement and learning experiences. These findings are supported by Qiao et al. (2023), who found that gamification can improve learning outcomes and cognitive engagement, as well as by Temel and Cesur (2024), who demonstrated the positive impact of gamification on motivation and academic achievement. Various studies on Wordwall also demonstrate its ability to create more interactive and enjoyable learning experiences. However, research on the use of gamified Wordwall to address learning burnout in Fiqh instruction remains limited and warrants further investigation.

Thus, there is a current research gap in the literature. The majority of previous studies have tended to focus on quantitative outputs, such as test scores, and have rarely examined the influence of gamification in depth from the perspective of students' psychological and qualitative aspects. Specifically, there has been no in-depth examination of how this gamification approach functions in reducing the burden of learning burnout in normative religious subjects such as

Fiqh. This is where the originality and state-of-the-art nature of this study lie, as it positions educational technology not merely as a tool for calculating scores, but as an instrument for fostering students' mental resilience in learning.

To address this gap in the literature and formulate solutions to the challenges in the field, this research paper aims to comprehensively, deeply, and contextually explore the application of the gamification approach using the Wordwall platform at MTs Darul Hikmah. Specifically, this study focuses its objectives on two aspects: describing the forms of learning burnout experienced by students in the Fiqh subject and describing the steps taken by teachers in implementing the gamification approach using Wordwall in Fiqh instruction

RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted based on the Interpretive Paradigm, which was implemented through a Descriptive Qualitative Approach. The fundamental characteristic of the interpretive paradigm applied in this research is its strict focus on understanding (*verstehen*) the meaning of the actors' subjective actions and deepening the theoretical process in the field. In line with the essence of qualitative methodology, this method was applied naturally because the gamification method or medium was being implemented directly in the field at the time the research was conducted.

This study limits its analysis to a specific spatial boundary, namely MTs Darul Hikmah. The selection of this research location was based on a purposive approach, given that this madrasah is one of the pilot institutions actively implementing Wordwall in its Fiqh curriculum. In this qualitative approach, the researcher acts as the primary instrument (human instrument), directly engaging in the field to collect data organically. The researcher is equipped with supporting instruments, including a semi-structured interview guide, a classroom observation sheet, and a documentation form.

Data sources in this study are classified into two categories: primary data and secondary data. Key informants (research subjects) for primary data were selected through purposive sampling, targeting Fiqh teachers, the madrasah principal as the operational policy-maker, and representatives of eighth-grade students showing signs of learning burnout. Secondary data in this study included documents such as teachers' digital lesson plans and teaching modules, grade records from Wordwall score histories, and institutional profiles.

Data collection was conducted simultaneously by combining classroom observation (of the learning process), in-depth interviews (with key informants), and the collection of supporting documents (such as grade records and teachers' administrative documents). To ensure data validity (trustworthiness), the researcher applied source triangulation (comparing data across informants), methodological triangulation (cross-verification of observations, interviews, and documents), and member checks to ensure data accuracy aligned with field conditions without interpretive manipulation.

The data analysis process utilized the interactive analysis model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana. This analytical technique proceeds in a circular and simultaneous manner through three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions along with final verification to credibly address the research focus.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Implementation of a Wordwall-Based Gamification Approach in Fiqh Instruction

Based on the results of field observations and interviews, the implementation of gamification using Wordwall in the Fiqh subject at MTs Darul Hikmah was carried out through several planned phases. In the planning stage, teachers developed teaching modules by mapping out Fiqh material with high textual density, such as the provisions on zakat, hajj, and muamalah. Teachers then designed interactive games on their Wordwall accounts by incorporating functional game mechanics. The game mechanics integrated into the digital platform are detailed in the following table;

Table: 1 Wordwall Gamification Mechanics in Fiqh Material

No.	Game Mechanics Component	Instructional Functions in Fiqh Learning
1.	Time Limit (Timer)	Trains students' speed of thinking in analyzing Fiqh principles/laws.
2.	Lifelines	Provides students with the opportunity to learn from their mistakes without fear.
3.	Instant Point Allocation	Provides immediate recognition for students' mastery of cognitive material.
4.	Leaderboard	Fosters healthy competition and increases focus in the classroom

During the lesson, Wordwall is used for introductory activities or formative assessments. The teacher displays quizzes or interactive games on the classroom screen, and students then take turns or work in groups to answer the Fiqh questions provided. The use of Wordwall makes the learning environment more active and engaging. Additionally, the leaderboard feature encourages students to participate more enthusiastically, improves their focus, and fosters healthy competition compared to learning that relies solely on lectures.

Student Learning Burnout in Fiqh Instruction

Prior to the implementation of this interactive media, field data confirmed a fairly widespread prevalence of learning burnout among eighth-grade students. These burnout symptoms were identified through three main dimensions according to Maslach's theory, which are visually illustrated in the figure below;

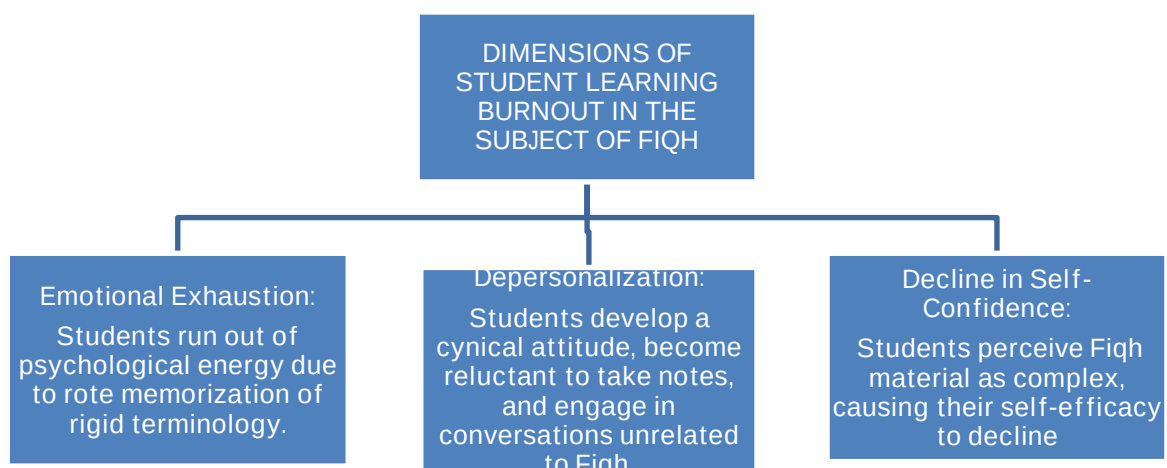


Figure 1: Dimensions of Student Learning Burnout Before the Intervention

Data from in-depth interviews corroborate the dimensional graph above. In the emotional exhaustion dimension, students felt drained of psychological energy because they had to memorize fiqh terms presented in a monotonous manner every week. The depersonalization dimension is marked by the emergence of cynical attitudes, reluctance to take notes, resting their heads on the desk, and even chatting about topics unrelated to the lesson during lectures. Finally, the dimension of reduced sense of academic self-efficacy is evident when students perceive fiqh material as too complex and rigid, leading them to feel unable to master basic competencies effectively, which in turn lowers their self-efficacy.

The Role of Wordwall-Based Gamification in Addressing Student Learning Burnout

An analytical discussion of the ongoing process shows that addressing the psychological aspects of learning burnout was successful because Wordwall's gamification design was able to break the chain of causes leading to burnout through several psychological mechanisms in learners;

Reducing Emotional Exhaustion through Playful Experiences (Gamefulness). The transformation of normative Fiqh texts into interactive game visuals on the Wordwall platform shifts students' perception from academic pressure to a challenging yet recreational activity. The sense of burnout caused by mental strain is alleviated by a relaxed and enjoyable classroom atmosphere.

Eroding Depersonalization Through Active Engagement. Wordwall's interactive components (such as quiz shows or term-matching card games) simultaneously stimulate students' motor skills and focus. These physical-digital activities compel students who initially withdrew (passively) to re-engage and actively interact with both teachers and peers.

Restoring Self-Efficacy Through Instant Feedback. The real-time scoring and instant confirmation of correct/incorrect answers on the Wordwall platform provide students with rapid recognition of their competence. When they successfully complete Fiqh game challenges and see their names on the

leaderboard, a strong sense of personal accomplishment arises, which directly restores their academic self-efficacy while breaking down the psychological barriers of learning burnout.

Overall, the interpretive analysis demonstrates that this technology-based medium functions as robust psychological scaffolding. Through the Wordwall platform, the initially rigid instructional burden of Fiqh material was successfully transformed into meaningful, enjoyable, and learner-centered learning experiences.

DISCUSSION

Deconstructing the Paradox of Fiqh Learning & The Anatomy of Learning Burnout

The teaching of fiqh at the madrasah level has historically carried a significant mandate as both an instrument for religious character development and a practical moral guide for students (Mani & Mishra, 2021). However, the empirical reality prior to the intervention in the eighth-grade class at MTs Darul Hikmah revealed a concerning instructional paradox. As a subject rich in normative legal texts and theological doctrines, the process of knowledge transfer in the classroom tends to be trapped in a monotonous, conventional approach. The dominance of this one-way lecture method gradually erodes students' room for imagination and active engagement. As a result, rather than serving as a contextual and well-internalized guide to life, Fiqh material which is dense with legal arguments and requires memorization of technical terms is viewed by students as a tedious academic burden. It is this functional gap that lies at the root of the widespread phenomenon of learning burnout among students.

A qualitative analysis of the psychological condition of students at MTs Darul Hikmah prior to the implementation of educational technology revealed a concerning pattern of burnout, which is categorized into three main dimensions according to Maslach's theory (Maslach & Leiter, 2021).

First, in the dimension of emotional exhaustion, students were at a point where their psychological energy was depleted due to constant pressure to memorize fiqh terms presented without any variation in teaching media.

Second, this boredom manifests itself in the form of depersonalization, characterized by changes in students' attitudes such as becoming cynical or apathetic, resting their heads on their desks, or mentally disengaging by chatting about topics unrelated to the lesson while the teacher is lecturing.

Third, there is a decline in a sense of academic achievement (reduced personal accomplishment). The perceived complexity and rigidity of Fiqh material undermine students' self-efficacy, leading them to feel incapable of mastering these core competencies effectively. This destructive cycle demonstrates that learning burnout is not merely a matter of declining academic performance, but rather a signal that the classroom learning ecosystem requires a radical restructuring that is adaptive to the psychological characteristics of the digital generation.

This was underscored by the admission of one eighth-grade student, who said, "Back then, Fiqh class used to make me so sleepy because all we did was listen to lectures and take notes on long Arabic terms." My mind would feel exhausted before we even started, so I'd rather chat with my classmate or pretend

to read a book while daydreaming. We also felt we'd never be able to memorize or understand the material on zakat or muamalah because it was too rigid, so we just resigned ourselves to getting bad grades on quizzes or exams (Interview with an 8th-grade student, May 2025).

A transformative response to this learning crisis was successfully achieved through a strategic transition from conventional, text-based methods to a gamification approach using the digital platform Wordwall (Muh. Al Amin et al., 2025). The results of this study convincingly demonstrate that integrating elements of digital game mechanics can significantly reduce learning burnout. This intervention process is directly linked to and logically flows from the findings gathered in the field. The success of this intervention stems from the functional alignment between the designed game elements and the restoration of students' psychological well-being.

For example, the use of digital leaderboards and instant feedback systems is not merely a visual enhancement but serves as a stimulus that captures attention and fosters healthy competition in the classroom (Coryunitha Panis et al., 2025). The inclusion of lifelines and a timer effectively transforms a rigid classroom atmosphere into an enjoyable space for intellectual challenges. Thus, the empirical findings of this study confirm that redesigning the learning experience through Wordwall's gamification elements successfully breaks the cycle of learning fatigue by restoring students' intrinsic motivation and joy of learning as they study Fiqh legal texts (Mani & Mishra, 2021).

Psychological Analysis of Game Elements (Gamefulness)

An exploration of the success of this technological intervention requires a deep understanding of the fundamental question: "Why did these positive outcomes occur in the classroom?" To answer this, we must dissect the instructional functions of the empirical data on game mechanics presented in Table 1. The phenomenon of decreased student boredom following the implementation of Wordwall is not a coincidental effect but rather the result of structured psychological manipulation through the experience of play (gamefulness) (Andi Juan et al., 2025).

When teachers integrate time-limit features (timers) and instant point allocation into Fiqh material with a high level of textual density such as the provisions on zakat, hajj, and muamalah a shift in students' cognitive perceptions occurs. The structure of the running timer encourages students' brains to process information quickly and nimbly, which in cognitive psychology is known as a trigger for a "state of flow" (deep focus) (Mani & Mishra, 2021). In this state of flow, students' attention is fully absorbed in the game, thereby cutting off the flow of academic distress caused by boredom. The cognitive load which was initially rigid, heavy, and stressful when studying Fiqh legal doctrines has been successfully transformed into a series of measurable digital challenges. This time-based competition triggers a burst of positive adrenaline (eustress) that sparks a passion for learning, enhances the sharpness of legal reasoning, and transforms the previously passive classroom atmosphere into a dynamic and competitive problem-solving arena (Coryunitha Panis et al., 2025).

The Theoretical Construction of Motivation

Theoretically, the construction of meaning behind the restoration of students' learning resilience at MTs Darul Hikmah can be explained through the lens of Self-Determination Theory (Mani & Mishra, 2021). The gamification approach via Wordwall consistently fulfills the three basic human psychological needs that drive intrinsic motivation: the need for competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Coryunitha Panis et al., 2025).

The instant feedback feature which provides immediate confirmation of whether an answer is correct or incorrect, along with an instant score offers real-time recognition of students' cognitive abilities. It is this rapid recognition that breaks down the barriers of academic helplessness and restores students' sense of personal accomplishment. Furthermore, the integration of "lifelines" plays a crucial and constructive role in learners' emotional well-being. In conventional Fiqh learning models, answering a question incorrectly often leads to social sanctions or embarrassment in front of the class, which exacerbates apathy (depersonalization).

However, the presence of lifelines on the Wordwall platform radically reduces this fear of academic failure (Mani & Mishra, 2021). These "lifelines" provide a safe psychological space for students to engage in trial and error; they realize that making mistakes in analyzing Islamic law is not the end of the world, but rather part of a learning process that can be corrected independently. This flexibility to try again fosters a strong sense of autonomy, where students have full control over their learning strategies. Through this combination of psychological safety and continuous recognition of competence, Wordwall's gamification successfully reshapes students' mindset transforming them from individuals trapped in the cycle of learning burnout into independent learners with strong self-efficacy.

Validation and Sustainability of Local Digital Research

The successful implementation of the Wordwall-based gamification approach at MTs Darul Hikmah did not occur in a vacuum but is strongly aligned with trends in educational technology research within the local context. To summarize, Wordwall's effectiveness in reducing learning fatigue aligns with the findings of Abuddar and Muali (2025) regarding the crucial role of adaptive learning strategies in fostering student learning engagement in digital environments. When instructional structures are facilitated by interactive media, students' emotional and cognitive engagement is automatically fostered (Coryunitha Panis et al., 2025). This demonstrates that Wordwall at MTs Darul Hikmah successfully sparked active engagement by creating a digital learning space that is responsive to students' psychological needs.

Furthermore, an in-depth analysis of the improved focus among eighth-grade students revealed similarities in cognitive retention patterns with the research on the integration of microlearning on digital platforms by Muali and Karlina (2025). The design of short questions, interactive quizzes, and instant visualizations on Wordwall essentially adopts the basic principles of microlearning, namely breaking down the dense, text-based, and normative material of Fiqh into small, engaging units of information. This approach has proven effective in maintaining students' attention spans and preventing them

from becoming bored (Afiyah et al., 2025).

This argument is further strengthened when comparing aspects of the visual experience. The interactive digital experience students have when accessing Wordwall results in a surge in academic engagement comparable to the use of Augmented Reality (AR) technology in the study by Muali and Bakron Andre Setiawan (2025). Both the Wordwall platform and AR technology are equally capable of reducing mental strain (academic distress) by reconstructing students' perspective on instructional material: from rigid text that must be memorized to an interactive digital reality that must be navigated as a challenge (Rachmawati et al., 2025).

Unlike platforms such as Kahoot or Quizizz, which tend to rely heavily on linear multiple-choice formats, Wordwall at MTs Darul Hikmah offers flexible templates such as matching games and anagrams. These features are far more adaptable for bridging Fiqh material that requires visualizing the correspondence between textual principles and their practical legal applications. Globally, these empirical findings in the field are also supported by robust theoretical validation from the global gamification literature. The transformation of the classroom environment at MTs Darul Hikmah shifting from passive and text-based to dynamic and participatory reinforces the research foundation (Qiao et al., 2023).

Theoretical Validation of the Effects of Global Gamification

On a broader scale, these empirical findings from the field receive robust theoretical validation from the global gamification literature. The transformation of the classroom climate at MTs Darul Hikmah from passive and text-based to dynamic and participatory reinforces the research foundation (Qiao et al., 2023). This global research confirms that gamification approaches have a massive impact on boosting cognitive engagement while simultaneously improving students' overall learning satisfaction.

This positive correlation also closely aligns with the findings of Temel and Cesur (2024), which show that the use of Web 2.0 tools packaged through game mechanics can significantly restore intrinsic motivation and lead students to better academic achievement in a digital learning environment. The following is a comparative map of literature and research findings:

Table: 2 Comparative Map Of Literature & Research Findings	
Contemporary Digital Studies	Confirmation of Findings at Darul Hikmah
Abuddar & Muali (2025)	Building student learning engagement
Muali & Karlina (2025)	Maintaining focus and cognitive retention through small units.
Muali & Bakron Andre Setiawan (2025)	Interactive visual reconstruction to reduce rigid academic workload.
(Qiao et al. (2023); Temel & Cesur, 2024)	Global validation: Web 2.0 gamification triggers intrinsic motivation.

State of the Art

This is where the novelty and specific contribution of this study lie. While the majority of previous studies, both at the local and global levels, have tended to focus on quantitative output dimensions such as academic test scores, this

study goes a step further by examining the psychological and qualitative aspects of learners.

To date, there have been very few studies that have thoroughly examined the impact of digital technology interventions in the context of reducing the burden of learning burnout in normative religious studies such as Fiqh. This study successfully fills this research gap by scientifically demonstrating that the gamification approach is not merely a technical tool for calculating cognitive scores or reducing momentary boredom, but rather acts as robust psychological scaffolding to build students' mental resilience in learning amid the digital transformation of madrasahs.

Empirical Pattern Abstraction (Conceptual Generalization)

A comprehensive synthesis of the qualitative data in this study leads us to a macro-level conclusion (conceptual generalization) regarding the management of students' psychological burdens in Islamic educational institutions. The findings indicate that learning burnout in subjects based on rigid and normative legal texts, such as Fiqh, can never be cured through conventional curative approaches. Linear, traditional academic policies such as administering remedial exams repeatedly or increasing the number of self-study hours actually have the potential to exacerbate students' emotional exhaustion.

This phenomenon indicates that the root cause of learning burnout does not lie in students' low cognitive capacity, but rather in the structural monotony of the information delivery model. Therefore, the transformative solution required is a complete restructuring of learning experience design. By manipulating game mechanics (such as time limits, guaranteed feedback, and a safe space for failure), the rigid cognitive load is successfully deconstructed into an intellectual adventure that sustainably triggers intrinsic motivation.

Practical Implications. Unlike conventional research trends that emphasize paper-based outcomes, the findings at MTs Darul Hikmah demonstrate that this gamification approach is capable of tangibly transforming the social landscape and the microcosm of interactions within the classroom. The practical impact of the Wordwall intervention is evident in the instant transformation of the classroom atmosphere. The classroom climate, which was originally dominated by passive, text-focused behavior—where students kept their heads down on their desks, displayed signs of fatigue, and chatted about topics unrelated to the lesson—was successfully revitalized into a dynamic, participatory learning environment. Students once again participated actively, engaging in a spirit of healthy competition and building positive, organic interactions with both the teacher and their peers as they worked through Fiqh case studies.

Theoretical Implications. Theoretically, the originality of this research makes an important contribution by providing a new blueprint for the direction of digital curriculum development in madrasahs. The integration of Web 2.0 technology into the classroom should no longer be viewed narrowly as merely a technical tool for measuring cognitive scores or displaying static visual media. This research reaffirms the repositioning of game-based educational technology as an essential interactive instrument for addressing psychological dimensions, building mental resilience, and maintaining students' psychological well-being amid the rapid pace of digital transformation in modern-era madrasah.

Mechanisms still depends on the stability of the madrasah's digital infrastructure and the teachers' technical readiness. Latent obstacles, such as limited access to devices or internet latency at MTs Darul Hikmah, can hinder the creation of an ideal "state of flow" during gameplay.

CONCLUSION

This qualitative case study concludes that the implementation of a gamification approach through the Wordwall platform plays a significant role in reducing the psychological dimensions of burnout in the Fiqh course at MTs Darul Hikmah. By integrating game elements such as points, challenge limits, and interactive visualizations, teachers successfully restored students' psychological resilience. This dynamic digital learning process effectively addresses the dimension of burnout by reducing emotional exhaustion, eliminating apathy (depersonalization), and restoring students' sense of academic achievement in the classroom. This study reinforces the theoretical proposition of the interpretive paradigm that improving enjoyable learning experiences is a key prerequisite for reducing students' academic distress and learning burnout in the era of madrasah digital transformation.

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