

The Role of Digital Technology as A Medium for Islamic Counselling to Enhance Anonymous Self-Disclosure: A Platform Study of Arahcelah

Mohamad Thohir¹, Fizna Adhilah¹, Hotim¹, Putra Wibisono¹

¹UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

In the era of Society 5.0, digital technology provides users with the opportunity to communicate and express themselves in unique ways. Some users choose to reveal their real identities, while others opt for anonymity to ensure security and confidentiality. This can be advantageous for the development of counselling media, as it can assist counselees in self-disclosure with ease and comfort. Arahcelah is a counselling medium developed to enhance client self-disclosure through an anonymous process. The purpose of this study is to determine the role of the Arahcelah platform in the era of digital technology as a counselling medium in improving anonymous self-disclosure. The research method used is descriptive qualitative analysis of the counselling service process on the Arahcelah platform. This research demonstrates that Arahcelah can be an effective counselling medium, enhancing individual self-disclosure through five key roles: practicality, openness, confidentiality, empathy, and responsiveness. These roles align with Islamic values.

Kata kunci : teknologi digital, media konseling Islam, pengungkapan diri



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Corresponding Author:

Mohamad Thohir
Email: mohamadthohir@uinsa.ac.id

Introduction

Recently, alarming facts about adolescents have surfaced, including suicides caused by depression, insecurity, or lack of confidence. Some news reports suggest that this is due to a lack of individual self-disclosure regarding the problems they face. Fauzia et al. (2019) suggest that individuals who struggle with self-disclosure may be influenced by their personality type. Specifically, introverted individuals may have difficulty socialising and may not have close friends to confide in. Alternatively, they may have friends to confide in but struggle with being precise and trusting others. Individuals who are less skilled in self-disclosure may face rejection from society. It is undeniable that the inability to share one's problems with others can lead to

anxiety, difficulty adjusting, lack of confidence, fear, and social isolation. Taylor revealed that self-disclosure is the ability of humans to provide information about personal problems to others in order to create intimacy among social beings. Taylor explains that self-disclosure is the act of sharing personal information with others to establish intimacy among social beings. Factors that can prevent individuals from self-disclosing include: firstly, a community bias, where individuals feel they are expected to solve their own problems; secondly, fear of punishment or rejection. Thirdly, when it comes to self-knowledge, individuals tend to present themselves in a positive light, making it difficult for them to confront their true selves.

Self-disclosure is a crucial aspect of social relationships. If individuals can self-disclose, they can reduce their mental burden, gain self-awareness, and improve their physical health. However, many individuals today find it challenging to self-disclose or are unable to do so. Therefore, public education is necessary to raise awareness about the conditions experienced by individuals who struggle with self-disclosure. Education has been provided in various fields, including counselling and guidance. However, individuals may feel uncomfortable seeking counselling services due to concerns about privacy and confidentiality. Direct consultations may be avoided due to fear of revealing personal information to others. However, a common issue arises that makes individuals hesitant to seek counselling services. They may feel embarrassed about their problems being known by others and therefore uncomfortable with direct consultation, as they wish to maintain their anonymity. Often, individuals are hesitant to disclose their problems due to feelings of awkwardness. This highlights the importance of a counsellor's skills and creativity in handling self-disclosure. Counsellors in creativity must be able to utilise digital technology as a tool. It is important to recognise that digital technology is currently advancing rapidly.

Counselling media refers to a counselling strategy that utilises creativity to develop unique and engaging services, with the aim of providing optimal counselling experiences (Suci Habibah, et al, 2021). With the advancement of technology, counselling media can now be accessed online through E-counselling. Online counselling is typically conducted through platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, and social media apps like WhatsApp, Instagram, Telegram, Line, and Twitter. It is important to maintain a clear and logical structure, using simple sentences and avoiding complex terminology. Additionally, it is crucial to use clear, objective, and value-neutral language, avoiding biased or emotional language and employing passive tone and impersonal construction. This presents an opportunity for counsellors to expand their reach and provide updates while maintaining self-disclosure through online counselling. Finally, the text should be free from grammatical errors, spelling mistakes, and punctuation errors.

The uses of digital technology are diverse, one of which is self-disclosure. Many people share their problems on social media platforms such as second Instagram accounts, Twitter, WhatsApp, and other anonymous websites. However, it is important to note that the objectivity of these disclosures may be questionable. Individuals use anonymous accounts on social media to feel free, safe, and follow trends. However, anonymity can also be uncomfortable for self-disclosure due to the potential for blasphemy from certain individuals. Anonymous websites have emerged as a platform for self-disclosure, providing a place for individuals to vent anonymously. The rise of anonymous websites has facilitated free self-disclosure. Setiawati suggests that anonymous social media accounts allow individuals to interact freely without fear of blasphemy due to the anonymity of their identity. Nur Lila also notes that the anonymous nature of online media can provide a helpful alternative for individuals who are embarrassed to seek traditional counselling. Natasha and Winduwati's research revealed that the function of self-disclosure on anonymous media is to express various kinds of feelings so that the individual is able to express himself in public media.

The research above presents an intriguing finding that anonymous websites can serve as a medium for self-disclosure. However, there are limitations to anonymous websites as a form of disclosure. Specifically, there are no suitable ideas or responses for interaction with others. Therefore, the Arahcelah platform has been developed as a self-disclosure medium that provides a space for confiding or Islamic counselling guidance as a form of problem-solving for individuals who are less open. Arahcelah is also used as a form of catharsis for individuals with problems, allowing them to disclose their issues. Later, expert counsellors will respond to these disclosures through podcasts, which will be uploaded to the Arah Celah Instagram and Spotify accounts. This allows listeners to hear the results of the responses to the confessions and may motivate others who have similar problems. and arahcelah is also interspersed with motivation. and the direction of the gap is also interspersed with Islamic motivation which is also called da'wah media. so that the formulation of the problem arises, How is the role of digital technology to increase anonymous self-disclosure on the direction of the gap platform? then the purpose of this study is to determine the role of the direction of the gap platform in increasing anonymous self-disclosure.

Method

This study employs descriptive qualitative research methods to collect and analyse data based on aspects relevant to the research object. Qualitative research is based on the perceptions, ideas, and beliefs of the people studied and cannot be measured by numbers. The theory used in qualitative research does not require a complete view of the studied subject. Therefore,

descriptive qualitative research is a method of processing data by analyzing aspects of the research object and presenting more in-depth data on the object under study.

Researchers using descriptive qualitative methods aim to describe the role of the Arahcelah platform in increasing anonymous self-disclosure. The researchers conducted observations during the period of June to September 2023 while the Arahcelah platform was present. The data was collected from incoming confessions on the anonymous website 'arahcelah'. Additionally, researchers made observations through the 'arahcelah' account, such as posts, comments, and likes from followers. After obtaining the data, it was reduced and conclusions were drawn.

Result

Arahcelah is a digital platform for Islamic counselling services that prioritises client anonymity. It utilises three integrated platforms, namely Instagram, Spotify, and Secreto, to provide convenience to all members of society. This approach is in line with the platform's aim to develop Islamic counselling services through the use of digital technology. Instagram is a highly active social media platform, particularly among teenagers. It fulfils their needs for self-expression, identity formation, and self-discovery (Sakti & Yulianto, 2013). Arahcelah, specifically @arahcelah.id on Instagram (instagram.com/arahcelah.id), was created to help teenagers meet their self-existence needs through content that discusses psychological issues and current realities faced by teenagers. This content includes short comics, quote reminders, and 'Did you know?' posts, all aimed at bridging the gap and providing direction and solutions to current teenage problems. The goal is to help adolescents grow and develop a better sense of identity.

To support the service, the counselee's identity is kept anonymous. The Secreto platform is used as a place for counselees to write about their problems. The platform is designed as a 'secret message book' where a person can write or comment anonymously through a user-created site. Secreto was chosen for its ease of access. On the other hand, users can provide feedback to the owner exclusively through the secreto owner's link without having to sign in to an account. The site system allows visitors to write or comment without restrictions and with anonymity, making it the reason why secreto is used in the arahcelah service.

Additionally, arahcelah employs Spotify as a media service, specifically Spotify Arah Celah. Spotify is an application that enables users to listen to music and podcasts. According to Data Indonesia, Indonesia is the second-largest consumer of podcasts in the world as of January 2022, after Brazil. Therefore, podcasts can serve as an alternative to social media. The Arahcelah service provides anonymous clients with expert counselling, where confessions are responded to by a counsellor and then uploaded as content on Spotify Arahcelah. This ensures that

responses can be easily accessed by those who write their problems in secret. Additionally, due to the wide reach of Spotify, it is hoped that the content will also benefit others who may have similar problems. The aim of Spotify Arahcelah is not limited to responding to anonymous client confessions, but also extends to other individuals who share similar feelings.

When using Islamic counselling services on the Arahcelah platform, clients must follow a few simple steps. Firstly, they should visit IG @arahcelah.id and click on the link in the Instagram bio. Next, they should navigate to the 'Secreto' section, where they will be directed to the homepage and a text box where they can express their problems or feelings anonymously. In that section, the counselee can view the confessions of other anonymous counselees. After submitting the message, the manager will receive it and directly contact the expert counsellor to respond through voice. This is a form of classical guidance that we provide. The counsellor's voice is then uploaded as motivational content on Spotify Arahcelah. The client can regularly check the confidential feedback section. If the counsellor has responded to the feedback, the manager will promptly reply with a comment that includes a Spotify link directly related to the feedback response. This is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

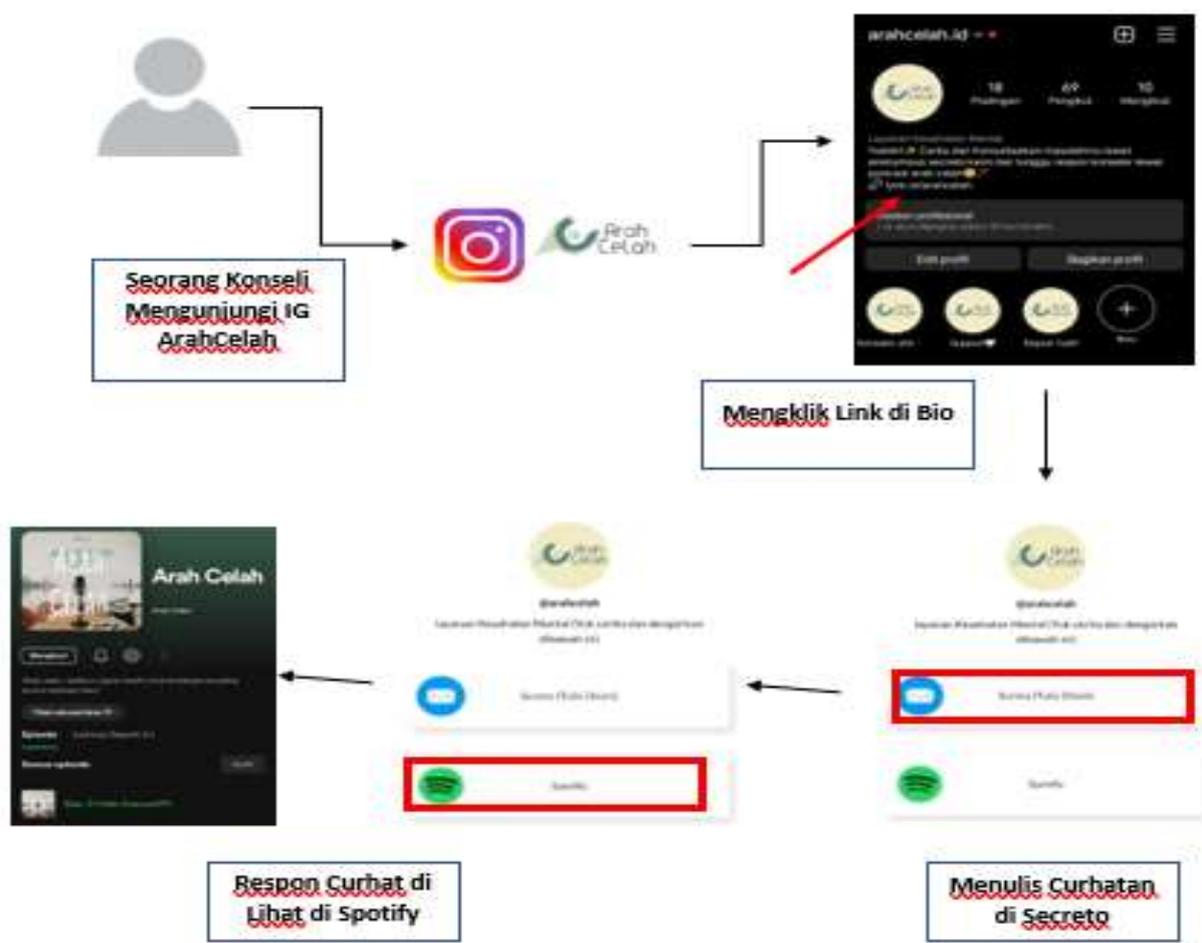


Figure 1

The Arahcelah service prioritises identity confidentiality. In the Arahcelah Secreto, only the writing of confessions is displayed without any identity or symbol of the author. This ensures that no trace of identity is recorded on the Secreto platform. On the homepage, a collection of confessions from counselees is displayed, where the author's user is not revealed from one story to another. The writings submitted to the secreto cannot be deleted or edited by the author, others, or the manager. This minimises the possibility of false stories being written due to additions or edits by others.

On the other hand, the homepage of Secreto Arahcelah, which contains confessions from the counselee, can be accessed by everyone. This includes other counselees and individuals who are just visiting without writing confessions. The Arahcelah counselees' written confessions are made available to create a sense of empathy and relatability for readers who may be experiencing similar problems. This allows the counselor's response to not only be directed towards the original writer, but also towards others who may be facing similar issues. This may encourage other individuals to share their own confessions through Secreto Arahcelah. Figure 2 below illustrates this.

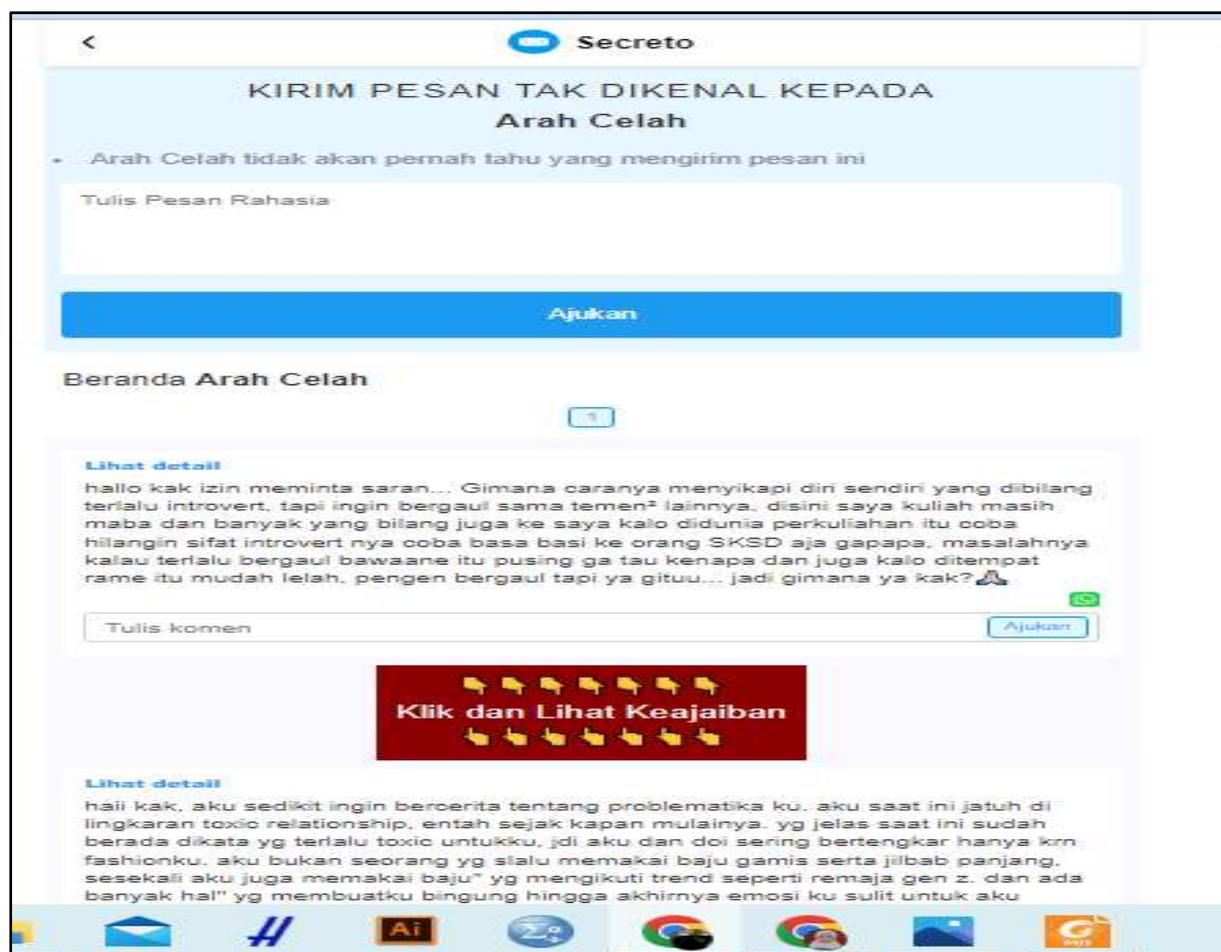


Figure 2

The counselee has written several outpourings in the *Secreto Arahcelah* where they express their problems more openly. This kind of openness is difficult to occur in face-to-face counselling meetings. For instance, a client wrote about their feelings of admiration for a man like the figure 3 below.

terkadang diberi rasa kagum sama seorang cowok. Tapi bodohnya pada tahun sebelumnya itu tiba-tiba aku ada rasa sama dia (1 cowok). Tiba-tiba saat itu dia menghilang dan datang kembali dengan tidak ada kejadian apa-apa. Super bodohnya lagi aku yang minta maaf dan minta klarifikasi gimana perasaannya. Otomatis disitu harga diri seorang perempuanku jatuh dan seketika aku sadar dan mengatakan "oh ya ya ngapain aku sampai segininya dan mau-maunya aku disuruh teman buat melakukan hal itu tadi (minta maaf dan klarifikasi). Sah

Figure 3

"Sometimes I'm given a sense of admiration for a guy. But stupidly in the previous year I suddenly had feelings for him (1 guy). Suddenly at that time he disappeared and came back with nothing happening. Super stupidly, I was the one who apologised and asked for clarification on how he felt. Automatically there my woman's self-esteem fell and immediately I realised and said "oh yes, why did I go to this extent and I wanted to be told by friends to do that (apologise and clarify)." said a counselee.

The counselee's sentence fragment illustrates her acknowledgement of feeling inadequate while engaging in an activity with the man she admires. The excerpt provided by the counselee indicates that they feel inadequate when engaging in activities with the person they admire. The anonymous counselee's disclosure is enhanced by their anonymity.

Conversely, another counselee provides a detailed explanation of the root cause of their issue as shown in the figure 4 below.

terlalu toxic untukku, jdi aku dan doi sering bertengkar hanya krn fashionku. aku bukan seorang yg slalu memakai baju gamis serta jilbab panjang, sesekali aku juga memakai baju" yg mengikuti trend seperti remaja gen z. dan ada banyak hal" yg membuatku bingung hingga akhirnya emosi ku sulit untuk aku kontrol. aku cuma ingin keluar dari

Figure 4

"so my boyfriend and I often fight just because of my fashion. I'm not someone who always wears gamis and long headscarves, sometimes I also wear clothes that follow trends like gen z teenagers. and there are many things that make me confused so that my emotions are difficult for me to control." Said a counsellor

The counselee's sentence demonstrates her willingness to document the cause of her dispute with her partner. Therefore, it can be inferred that she is more receptive to recording her issues.

Discussion

The systematic process of arahcelah services demonstrates the necessity of using digital technology for counselling due to the ease of access it provides. Counselees can easily access counselling services through arahcelah social media, particularly Instagram. Instagram allows access to secreto and spotify arahcelah. On the other hand, the content on Arahcelah's Instagram account can also inspire trust in its followers, encouraging them to seek counselling services on the platform.

Arahcelah offers five anonymous roles in digital counselling services: practicality, confidentiality, openness, empathy, and responsiveness. One of the goals of digital technology is to provide convenience in various aspects. In the field of counselling, practical aspects are essential in providing services to counselees. The use of technology can offer users such alternatives and practices. According to research conducted by Sholehah et al. (2020), technology can provide guidance and counselling services from home. Even younger generations now consider the internet an integral part of their lives due to its ease of use for communication, interaction, and work. Technology has made these interactions possible.

Arahcelah identifies five anonymous aspects of roles in digital counselling services: practical roles, confidentiality, openness, empathy, and responsiveness. One of the goals of digital technology is to provide convenience in various aspects, including counselling services. Therefore, it is important for digital counselling services to have practical aspects in providing services to counselees, which can be achieved through the use of technology. According to Sholehah et al's research, technology can offer alternative counselling services such as home-based guidance and counselling (Isna Ni'matus Sholihah & Titin Handayani, 2020). The younger generation now considers the internet an integral part of their lives due to its ease of use for communication, interaction, and work. The development of digital platforms in counselling services is necessary to provide satisfaction to counselees who may prefer online self-help or counselling services due to their accessibility (Sheila Maria Belgis Putri Affiza, 2022).

The confidentiality aspect of the Arahcelah platform is emphasised by the fact that there is no trace of the counselee's identity, as they only share their story or problem. The confidentiality aspect of the Arahcelah platform is emphasised by the fact that there is no trace of the counselee's identity, as they only share their story or problem. This anonymity is a key feature of Arahcelah's services, which aim to increase self-disclosure. Research conducted by Cintania et al. (year) on 'The Effect of Anonymity on Self-Disclosure in Generation Z on Twitter' demonstrates that identity anonymity is a significant factor in triggering individuals to engage in self-disclosure. The R square results indicate that anonymity accounts for 86.1% of the

variance, with the remaining percentage being influenced by other factors (Pramesti & Dewi, 2022).

Openness can increase an individual's confidence, problem-solving abilities, and reduce their burden (Gainau, 2009). It allows a person to share details about themselves with others, both directly and indirectly, as demonstrated by the story of *Secreto*, who was able to reveal previously undisclosed problems through the *Arahcelah* platform. It allows a person to share details about themselves with others, both directly and indirectly, as demonstrated by the story of *Secreto*, who was able to reveal previously undisclosed problems through the *Arahcelah* platform. *Arahcelah* allows individuals to express themselves anonymously. Counselling services also require openness from the counselee to receive complete information about their problems. Quick and appropriate responses are necessary to provide comfort to the counselee.

The counsellor should provide empathy during the counselling process to create a sense of security and comfort for the counselee. The counsellor should provide empathy during the counselling process to create a sense of security and comfort for the counselee. The counsellor should provide empathy during the counselling process to create a sense of security and comfort for the counselee. This can help build trust and encourage self-disclosure. Research suggests that individuals make self-disclosures on the *@subtanyar1* Twitter account due to positive feedback from other followers, such as advice, support, and motivation. This moral support provides a sense of empathy and sympathy for the individual (Mardiana & Zi'ni, 2020). The *Arahcelah* platform offers empathy by allowing users to feel a sense of connection through the confessions shared on *Secreto*. The responses from the original counsellor, which are uploaded directly via Spotify podcast, can motivate others who are facing similar problems.

Responsive service is the provision of immediate help to counsees dealing with problems. Social media users may be afraid to reveal themselves due to fear of negative feedback, which can greatly affect their psychology (Natalia, 2016). On social media, individual trust is often based on the support received from other accounts (Sterrett et al., 2019). To increase individual trust and encourage self-disclosure behaviour, Devito suggests giving positive comments to individuals who share personal information or problems (Boer & Pratama, 2022). In this direction, the expert counsellor responds with sensitivity. The response provides comfort by avoiding judgement and blame, and instead focuses on finding a solution to the problem presented by the counselee.

A comparison between *Arahcelah*'s platform and those found on social media reveals that while the latter often offer practical, confidential, and open features, *Arahcelah*'s account stands out for its responsive and empathetic aspects. Responsiveness is managed by experts in the field. Empathy creates a sense of compatibility, allowing users to share their problems in

detail without hesitation. This platform, Arahcelah, provides a safe space for users to express themselves without fear of being judged or having their identity revealed.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that the digital platform Arahcelah, which integrates three social media platforms - Instagram, Secret0, and Spotify - to provide Islamic counselling services, can increase self-disclosure. Arahcelah has five roles in improving individual self-disclosure, which are strongly related to practicality, openness, confidentiality, empathy, and responsiveness. These roles are obtained due to Arahcelah's digital technology base.

This study suggests that youth counsellors can incorporate digital media into their counselling services. It is recommended that other researchers also explore the potential benefits of digital technology in counselling services.

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