

STAYING UP LATE AMONG GEN Z: HEALTH IMPACTS ON FUSI STUDENTS THROUGH QUR'ANIC PERSPECTIVES

Nurpadila¹, Sori Monang²^{1,2}Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, IndonesiaEmail : n93212046@gmail.com¹, sorimonang@acara.id²

DOI:

Received: Juni 2026

Accepted: June 2026

Published: Juli 2026

Abstract :

Late-night wakefulness has become a common lifestyle among Generation Z due to academic demands and intensive use of digital technology. This study explores the experiences of Qur'anic Studies students in engaging with this habit and examines it through a contextual interpretation of Q.S. Al-Qashash [28]:73 and Q.S. Ar-Rum [30]:23. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, the study involved 30 purposively selected students of the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Studies at UIN Sumatera Utara who met the established research criteria and provided data until saturation was achieved. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using open, axial, and selective coding. The findings indicate that late-night wakefulness is shaped by academic pressures, digital distractions, and the perception of nighttime as a productive period. This habit contributes to decreased concentration, reduced quality of Qur'anic memorization, physical fatigue, and theological dissonance between religious understanding and daily practices. Contextual interpretation of the verses shows that the Qur'an positions the night as a period of sakan (tranquility), rest, and recovery, while daytime is intended for productive activities. The study highlights the importance of tawazun (balance) as a framework for harmonizing academic productivity, physical well-being, and spiritual awareness in the digital era.

Keywords : late-night wakefulness; Generation Z; Qur'anic Studies students; sakan; tawazun; contextual interpretation.

Abstrak :

Budaya begadang menjadi salah satu gaya hidup yang semakin umum di kalangan Generasi Z akibat tuntutan akademik dan intensitas penggunaan teknologi digital. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengkaji pengalaman mahasiswa Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir dalam menjalani budaya begadang serta menganalisisnya melalui tafsir kontekstual terhadap Q.S. Al-Qashash [28]:73 dan Q.S. Ar-Rum [30]:23. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif fenomenologis dengan melibatkan 30 mahasiswa Fakultas Ushuluddin dan Studi Islam UIN Sumatera Utara yang dipilih secara purposif sesuai kriteria penelitian dan diwawancarai hingga mencapai saturasi data. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dan dianalisis menggunakan teknik open coding, axial coding, dan selective coding. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa budaya begadang dipengaruhi oleh tekanan akademik, distraksi digital, serta pemaknaan malam sebagai ruang produktivitas. Kebiasaan ini berdampak pada penurunan konsentrasi, berkurangnya kualitas hafalan Al-Qur'an, kelelahan fisik, serta munculnya disonansi teologis antara pemahaman keagamaan dan praktik kehidupan sehari-hari. Analisis tafsir menunjukkan bahwa Al-Qur'an memposisikan malam sebagai ruang sakan (ketenangan), istirahat, dan pemulihan, sedangkan siang diperuntukkan bagi aktivitas produktif. Temuan ini menegaskan pentingnya konsep tawazun sebagai kerangka keseimbangan antara produktivitas akademik, kesehatan, dan kesadaran spiritual di era digital.

Kata Kunci: budaya begadang; Generasi Z; mahasiswa Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir; sakan;

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has significantly changed the lifestyles of Generation Z, including how they manage their time, interact socially, and carry out academic activities. As a generation that grew up in a digital environment that is almost infinitely connected, Generation Z has a high level of attachment to social media, digital entertainment platforms, and various communication devices that allow activities to continue 24 hours a day. This situation is slowly shifting the conventional boundaries between work, study, and rest, giving rise to increasingly flexible lifestyles, but at the same time vulnerable to disruptions to human biological rhythms (Twenge, 2017; Zis, Effendi, & Roem, 2021). Recent empirical data further confirms the intensity of digital technology use among Generation Z. According to the report of DataReportal Indonesia (2025), internet penetration in Indonesia has reached approximately 79.5% of the total population, with young people constituting the most active user group. The report also shows that Indonesian internet users spend an average of more than 7 hours per day online across various digital platforms. In addition, social media has become an integral part of daily life, with users spending around 3 hours per day accessing social networking applications. These patterns indicate that Generation Z lives within a highly connected digital ecosystem where the boundaries between learning, communication, entertainment, and leisure are increasingly blurred. Despite the growing concern regarding sleep-related problems among young adults, the phenomenon of staying up late continues to increase due to the expansion of digital technology and changing academic lifestyles. This situation raises important questions regarding how young Muslims understand and respond to these practices within the framework of Qur'anic teachings concerning the function of night and day.

One of the most obvious manifestations of this change is the emergence of a culture of staying up late as part of everyday life. No longer confined to specific work or incidental needs, nighttime activities have become a relatively normal habit among students and young people. Various academic activities, social media consumption, digital entertainment, online communication, and even organizational activities often continue late into the night until 12 midnight. This condition is reinforced by the pressures of social identity in the digital space, which push individuals to stay connected to the relentless flow of information, trends, and social interactions (Bado, Tahir, & Supatminingsih, 2023; Husna & Mairita, 2024).

The phenomenon of staying up late among Generation Z cannot be understood solely as a matter of individual choice, but rather is the result of a complex interaction between academic demands, technological developments, and cultural changes. Various studies show that students often face pressure to complete assignments, achieve academic goals, engage in organizational activities, and maintain a social presence in the digital space. In such situations, nighttime is often perceived as a quieter and more productive time to complete tasks left undone during the day. As a result, the nighttime's function as a time

for rest is slowly being redefined as a space for productivity and digital consumption.

These lifestyle changes have various consequences for physical, psychological, and academic health. Exposure to blue light from digital devices at night is known to disrupt the body's circadian rhythm and can significantly reduce sleep quality. Persistent sleep disturbances can increase the risk of various health problems, ranging from metabolic disorders to a reduced overall quality of life (Rif'ah et al., 2024). Furthermore, sleep deprivation is also associated with decreased concentration, impaired emotional regulation, increased stress levels, and decreased academic performance in students (Khair & Usiono, 2025).

Recent neuroscience findings further reinforce the importance of sleep as a fundamental biological need. Research shows that sleep deprivation directly impacts cognitive abilities by disrupting memory encoding, consolidation, and retrieval (Tarokh, Saletin, & Carskadon, 2016). Sleep deprivation is also associated with decreased synaptic plasticity, increased neuroinflammation, and impaired hippocampal function, which plays a crucial role in learning and long-term memory formation (Adeniji, Igado, Olopade, & Femi-Akinlosotu, 2026). At the same time, sleep deprivation has been shown to decrease alertness, prolong reaction time, disrupt emotional stability, and alter the functional connectivity of various brain regions associated with attention and information processing (Weng et al., 2025). These findings demonstrate that sleep is not merely a physiological need but also a crucial prerequisite for the maintenance of human intellectual function. These findings are further supported by Walker (2017), who argues that sleep plays a fundamental role in cognitive performance, emotional regulation, memory consolidation, and long-term neurological health.

Although research on the culture of staying up late continues to grow, most studies still focus on health, psychology, and digital behavior. Solutions offered generally revolve around practicing sleep hygiene, reducing device use, increasing physical activity, or stress management strategies to improve sleep quality (Al'Farisi et al., 2025). Besides that Although research on the culture of staying up late continues to grow, previous studies have primarily examined the phenomenon from health, psychological, and digital behavior perspectives. For example, Khair and Usiono (2025) found that unhealthy lifestyle patterns among university students, including insufficient sleep, negatively affect physical well-being and academic functioning. Similarly, Rif'ah et al. (2024) emphasized the adverse health consequences of late-night gadget use among adolescents, highlighting sleep disruption as a major risk factor. From a psychological and neuroscientific perspective, Owens (2014) and Tarokh et al. (2016) demonstrated that sleep deprivation impairs cognitive performance, emotional regulation, and memory processes. Meanwhile, studies on Generation Z have focused largely on the influence of digital media, social connectivity, and online behavior in shaping daily lifestyles (Wang, Huam, & Hamid, 2025; Zis et al., 2021). While these studies provide valuable insights into the causes and consequences of staying up late, they generally conceptualize the phenomenon as a health, behavioral, or technological issue. Consequently, limited attention has been given to how individuals subjectively interpret the experience of staying up late, particularly

in relation to religious values, personal meaning, and Qur'anic understandings of the function of night and rest. This gap becomes especially relevant in the context of Muslim students whose daily experiences are shaped not only by academic and digital pressures but also by religious consciousness and theological reflection. These approaches make important contributions, but tend to frame the phenomenon of staying up late as purely a biological and behavioral issue. As a result, the dimensions of values, beliefs, and meaning that shape how individuals understand and experience the habit of staying up late have received relatively little attention.

In the context of Muslim society, this issue is particularly interesting because daily life is shaped not only by biological needs and social demands, but also by religious value systems that provide normative orientations for the use of time. The Quran contains numerous guidelines regarding the regular rhythms of human life, including the relationship between day and night activities. Therefore, the experiences of individual Muslims in living the culture of staying up late cannot be separated from the process of interpretation and negotiation of their religious values.

This phenomenon is clearly evident in the lives of students in the Qur'anic Sciences and Tafsir Study Program. As an academic group intensively studying the Qur'an, they have relatively strong access to normative knowledge regarding the function of time, life balance, and the importance of maintaining the body's trust. However, at the same time, they live in a contemporary academic reality characterized by the demands of completing assignments, organizational activities, the pressure of completing studies, and high involvement in the digital ecosystem. Preliminary observations conducted by the researcher prior to the study indicated that many students frequently slept after midnight, particularly during periods of intensive coursework and organizational activities. Informal conversations with several students also revealed that staying up late had become a common habit, often justified by academic responsibilities and the use of digital media during nighttime hours. These preliminary findings suggest a discrepancy between students' normative understanding of the Qur'anic teachings regarding balance and rest and their actual daily practices. This situation gives rise to an interesting paradox: students who study the Qur'anic values of order in life often engage in practices of staying up late that potentially contradict those values.

Based on the review of previous studies (Adeniji et al., 2026). Research concerning sleep deprivation has predominantly focused on its effects on physical health, cognitive performance, psychological well-being, and academic achievement. Existing studies generally explain the phenomenon from medical, psychological, and behavioral perspectives. Meanwhile, studies examining Generation Z mostly emphasize digital behavior, technology dependence, and lifestyle patterns. However, there remains a significant gap in the literature regarding how Muslim students, particularly those studying Qur'anic Sciences and Tafsir, interpret and negotiate the practice of staying up late within the framework of their religious understanding. Previous studies have rarely explored the intersection between academic demands, digital culture, and

Qur'anic values in shaping students' experiences of sleep deprivation. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by investigating the lived experiences of Qur'anic Studies students and analyzing the phenomenon through the contextual interpretation of Q.S. Al-Qashash [28]:73 and Q.S. Ar-Rum [30]:23.

This study aims to: (1) explore the lived experiences of Qur'anic Studies and Tafsir students in practicing late-night wakefulness; (2) identify the factors that contribute to the emergence of staying-up-late behavior among students; (3) analyze the cognitive, psychosomatic, and spiritual impacts of the practice; and (4) interpret the phenomenon through the contextual exegesis of Q.S. Al-Qashash [28]:73 and Q.S. Ar-Rum [30]:23 in order to formulate a balanced framework (tawazun) for student life in the digital era.

Based on this background, this study aims to understand the experiences of students of the Qur'anic Studies and Tafsir Study Program in living the culture of staying up late, identify the meanings they construct for this practice, and explain how they negotiate the ideals of the Qur'anic values with the academic and digital realities they face. The novelty of this study lies in the use of a phenomenological approach to reveal the subjective experiences of students studying the Qur'an in facing the culture of staying up late and explaining the dynamics of the relationship between theological awareness, academic demands, and contemporary digital life. Thus, this study is expected to expand the study of the culture of staying up late not only as a health issue or digital behavior, but also as a socio-religious phenomenon that involves the process of negotiating meaning in the lives of Muslim students.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to understand the lived experiences of students in navigating the culture of staying up late amidst academic demands and the digital environment. The phenomenological approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the subjective meanings given by informants to the experience of sleeping late, the factors behind it, and the consequences they feel on academic life, health, and spirituality. Phenomenological research seeks to identify the shared essence of an experience shared by a group of individuals regarding a particular phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The phenomenological orientation adopted in this study is also influenced by the interpretive tradition developed by Moustakas (1994), which emphasizes understanding the essence of participants' lived experiences through reflective description and thematic analysis.

The research was conducted on active students of the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Studies (FUSI) UIN North Sumatra who are included in the Generation Z category. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique by considering the suitability of characteristics to the research focus. Informant criteria included: (1) active students of FUSI UIN North Sumatra; (2) have a habit of sleeping after 24.00 WIB at least three times a week; (3) use digital devices intensively at night; and (4) are willing to participate in an in-depth interview process. Based on these criteria, 30 informants were obtained which were considered sufficient to achieve data saturation, namely the condition when

additional interviews no longer produce significant new information or themes.

Primary data was collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews. The interviews focused on informants' experiences with sleep patterns, nighttime digital activities, academic demands, perceptions of health, experiences memorizing the Quran, and their interpretations of Islamic teachings regarding the function of the night. All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and then analyzed step by step.

Phenomenological data analysis was conducted in several stages. First, the researcher repeatedly read all transcripts to gain a comprehensive understanding of the informants' experiences. Second, open coding was conducted to identify meaningful statements related to the phenomenon of staying up late. Third, codes with conceptual links were grouped through axial coding to form broader thematic categories. Fourth, selective coding was conducted to integrate the various categories into core categories that explained the essence of the informants' collective experiences. This process resulted in several main themes that then became the basis for developing a conceptual model of the relationship between academic pressure, digital media use, the culture of staying up late, cognitive-spiritual impacts, and efforts to restore life balance.

Apart from field data, this research utilizes library data in the form of Al-Quran verses related to night functions, especially Q.S. Al-Qashash [28]:73 and Q.S. Ar-Rum [30]:23, as well as relevant interpretive literature. The interpretation of verses is carried out using the contextual interpretation approach developed by Abdul Mustaqim. This approach places the text of the Al-Qur'an in a dialogue between the context of the revelation of the verse, linguistic meaning, interpretation of scholars, and contemporary social reality, thereby enabling the birth of an understanding that is relevant to the cultural phenomenon of staying up late among students in the digital era (Mustaqim, 2017).

To enhance the validity of the findings, the study employed source triangulation and theory triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data between informants, while theory triangulation was conducted through a dialogue between phenomenological findings, neuroscience literature on the impact of sleep deprivation, and interpretations of the Quran. The integration of these three sources of knowledge was used to build a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of staying up late and to formulate the concept of *tawazun* as a normative framework for managing Muslim students' rest time in the digital era.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Night as a Space for Student Productivity

Research findings indicate that the habit of staying up late among students at the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Studies (FUSI) at UIN North Sumatra cannot be understood solely as spontaneous individual behavior. The experiences of informants demonstrate that the night has undergone a reconstruction of its meaning from merely a time for biological rest to a space of productivity that is considered more conducive to completing various academic demands. Of the 30 informants interviewed, the majority associated the habit of staying up late with completing coursework, writing theses, revising with

supervisors, and organizational activities that often continue late into the night.

Table 1. Factors Forming the Habit of Staying Up Late among FUSI Students

Triggering Factors	Number of Informants
Academic assignments, theses, revisions	24
Digital activities (social media and online entertainment)	22
Student organization activities	8
Side jobs	4
Insomnia or difficulty sleeping	3

Source: Results of researcher interviews, 2026.

The data in Table 1 shows that academic factors are the most dominant reason for students late-night habits. One participant explained:

“I often start working on assignments after midnight because that is the only time I can focus without interruptions from lectures, organizational activities, or social obligations.”

Another informant similarly stated:

“When the campus activities are over and everyone is asleep, I feel more productive. That is why most of my academic work is done at night.”

Phenomenologically, this experience demonstrates a redefinition of the function of time in students' lives. Nighttime is no longer perceived as a space for energy recovery, but rather as an instrument for pursuing academic goals postponed during the day. From a lived experience perspective, students develop an understanding that academic productivity requires a state of quietude that is difficult to find during the busy daytime. Consequently, staying up late gains rational legitimacy as an adaptive strategy to meet the demands of higher education.

These findings align with Generation Z's behavioral tendencies, which demonstrate high flexibility in managing the space and time of daily activities. This generation grew up in a digital environment that allows work, communication, and access to information to occur without clear temporal boundaries. Research on the characteristics of Generation Z shows that this group tends to reorganize daily activities based on perceived efficiency and personal convenience rather than following conventional time rhythms (Halibas, Akram, Hoang, & Hoang, 2025). In the context of this research, the preference for working at night is a form of adaptation to the academic environment as well as a manifestation of the digital generation's culture, which no longer views night as a natural boundary for human activity.

Interestingly, the productivity of late-night work constructed by students is not entirely born of objective academic needs, but is also related to the habit of procrastination. Several informants admitted that assignments that could have

been completed earlier were often delayed until closer to the deadline. This situation encourages the practice of "cramming," which then becomes the primary reason for staying awake until the early hours. Thus, staying up late is not only a consequence of the high academic load, but also the result of the interaction between institutional demands and students' own time management patterns.

This phenomenon demonstrates that nighttime productivity is actually paradoxical. On the one hand, students experience increased focus and concentration when working at night. On the other hand, this strategy creates a cycle that potentially worsens quality of life by reducing the sleep time the body needs for physiological and cognitive recovery. In other words, productivity gained at night is often achieved at the expense of basic biological needs.

In addition to academic assignments, student organization activities also contribute to the development of a culture of staying up late. Students active in organizations report that meetings, activity preparation, and program coordination often take place at night after all members have completed their lectures. This situation demonstrates that the night serves as an alternative social space that allows for various collective activities to be carried out without disrupting the formal academic schedule. Therefore, the construction of the night as a space of productivity encompasses not only individual dimensions but also social dimensions legitimized by student organizational culture.

Based on the overall findings, it can be understood that the habit of staying up late among FUSI students is rooted in the social construct of nighttime as a space for productivity that is considered more effective than daytime. This productivity is shaped by a combination of academic demands, procrastination tendencies, and organizational activities that take place outside of class hours. These findings demonstrate that the culture of staying up late is not simply a matter of sleep discipline, but rather a social phenomenon born from students' negotiations with the various demands of contemporary academic life. Thus, students' experience of staying up late needs to be understood as an adaptation strategy to an educational structure that demands high performance while providing relatively limited space for balanced time management.

Digital Media and the Culture of Staying Up Late Among Students

Besides being influenced by academic demands, research findings indicate that FUSI students' night-time habits are also shaped by their intense interaction with digital media. Of the 30 informants interviewed, 22 admitted that social media use was a major factor keeping them awake late at night. The most frequent activities included watching short videos on TikTok, browsing Instagram, communicating via WhatsApp, watching YouTube, playing online games, and even online shopping. Interestingly, most informants revealed that these activities were initially undertaken simply to fill their free time after completing college assignments or organizational activities. However, in practice, the duration of digital media use often lasted much longer than planned.

Table 2. Digital Activities That Trigger Students' Stay-Up-Night Habits

Digital Activities	Intensity of Appearance in Interviews
TikTok	Very high
Instagram	Very high
WhatsApp	High
YouTube	High
Online Gaming	Medium
Online Shopping	Low

Source: Results of researcher interviews, 2026.

The numerical distribution presented in Table 2 indicates that TikTok and Instagram were the most frequently mentioned digital platforms associated with delayed sleep patterns. These findings suggest that social media occupies a central role in students' nighttime activities and contributes significantly to the continuation of wakefulness beyond intended sleeping hours, but has become part of students' daily lives in managing academic and social pressures. Several informants admitted to accessing social media after completing assignments for entertainment or relaxation. However, the platform's algorithms, which continuously present content, cause them to lose awareness of the duration of their use. As a result, their planned bedtime is continually delayed until the early hours of the morning. In this context, staying up late is no longer solely a consequence of academic work but also a result of a strong attachment to the digital ecosystem, which is always available and easily accessible.

One participant described:

"Initially I only wanted to check TikTok for a few minutes after studying, but the content kept appearing and suddenly it was already two or three in the morning."

Another participant noted:

"Social media feels like a reward after finishing assignments, but sometimes I lose track of time and postpone sleep much longer than intended."

Phenomenologically, this experience demonstrates that the nighttime has evolved into an autonomous space relatively free from various institutional demands. During the day, students are within structures that regulate their activities through class schedules, academic assignments, organizational activities, and family demands. Conversely, the nighttime presents a subjective experience of personal freedom to determine activities according to one's own desires. It is within this space that digital media occupies a central position as a means of recreation, psychological escape, and self-expression. Therefore, social media use at night cannot be reduced to merely entertainment consumption, but also represents a form of student negotiation regarding the need for personal space that is difficult to obtain during the day.

This finding is closely related to the concept of revenge bedtime procrastination (Owens, 2014), which is the tendency for individuals to delay

bedtime to regain control over their personal time after a stressful day of busy activities. In the context of this study, many informants implicitly displayed this characteristic. They recognized that their bodies needed rest, yet still chose to prolong their waking hours to enjoy digital activities perceived as providing pleasure and freedom. Thus, sleep delay is not always caused by an inability to manage time, but also a form of psychological compensation for the perceived limitations of personal space during the day.

This interpretation aligns with the characteristics of Generation Z, who grew up in a highly connected digital environment. Bibliometric research conducted by Halibas et al. shows that digital media has become a crucial element in shaping the identity and behavior of contemporary youth (Halibas et al., 2025). Social life, information seeking, consumption activities, and the formation of personal preferences all take place through digital platforms integrated into daily routines. As a result, the boundaries between functional and recreational needs in technology use are becoming increasingly blurred. The findings of this study demonstrate a similar situation, where social media is not only used for academic purposes, but also becomes a primary means of filling free time and reducing boredom.

Furthermore, students' attachment to digital media can be explained through the concepts of parasocial relationships and emotional attachment (Wang et al., 2025). Explains that the interactivity of digital platforms allows for the formation of strong emotional connections between users and the content and figures they follow. This connection encourages individuals to remain connected to the available flow of information, even when the activity no longer provides clear benefits. In interviews, several informants admitted to continuing to scroll even though they were not looking for specific information. They persisted in the cycle of content consumption because of curiosity about the next information update, a desire to stay connected to their social circle, or simply to obtain instant entertainment before bed. This condition indicates that digital media has formed a pattern of emotional engagement that contributes to the lengthening of the duration of nighttime wakefulness.

Research findings also show that digital escapism often transcends the academic rationale initially used to justify staying up late. As discussed in the previous section, students construct the night as a productive space for completing various academic assignments. However, once this space is established, digital activities increasingly take up a larger portion of their time, gradually shifting the productivity orientation toward entertainment consumption. In many cases, completing academic assignments isn't immediately followed by bedtime, but rather by scrolling, watching videos, or interacting on social media for the next few hours.

Based on the overall findings, it can be understood that the culture of staying up late among FUSI students is not only born from academic pressure, but is also fostered by the digital culture inherent in the lives of Generation Z. Social media functions as a psychological escape space that offers entertainment, freedom, and social connectedness when students feel free from various institutional demands. However, the comfort generated by this digital space

simultaneously creates a repetitive and difficult to control sleep delay mechanism. Thus, the culture of staying up late among students is the result of a complex interaction between the demands of academic productivity and the allure of digital escapism that continues to operate in the daily lives of contemporary young people.

Cognitive and Psychosomatic Impacts of Staying Up Late

Research findings indicate that the habit of staying up late does not stop at changing sleep patterns alone, but produces a series of consequences that are clearly felt by students in their daily lives. Of the 30 informants interviewed, 27 reported experiencing physical complaints after staying up late, while 23 admitted to experiencing decreased concentration and memory, particularly in academic activities and memorizing the Quran. Furthermore, 21 informants mentioned changes in emotional conditions such as irritability, sensitivity, and experiencing more intense mood fluctuations compared to when getting enough sleep.

Table 3. Impacts Felt by Students After Staying Up Late

Impact	Number of Informants
Physical fatigue, dizziness, drowsiness	27
Decreased focus and concentration	23
Decreased quality of Quran memorization	23
Emotional and mood disturbances	21
Disruption of eating patterns and daily activities	15

Source: Results of researcher interviews, 2026.

Physically, the majority of informants described feeling heavy the morning after staying up late. As one informant reported:

“The next day I often feel exhausted during lectures. Even when I try to focus, my mind feels slow and I struggle to follow the discussion.”

Another participant explained:

“When I stay up late repeatedly, I notice that my Qur’an memorization becomes weaker and I need more repetitions to remember the verses.” The most common complaints were excessive sleepiness during lectures, headaches, fatigue, reduced energy for campus activities, and difficulty maintaining productivity throughout the day. Some students even reported falling asleep in class or losing motivation to participate in academic activities because their bodies had not fully recovered from the previous night's lack of sleep. These experiences suggest that staying up late creates an imbalance between the body's biological needs and the demands of the next day's academic activities.

From a phenomenological perspective, the experience of fatigue is not only related to the body as a biological entity, but also to how individuals

experience their world. A tired body changes how students interact with the academic environment, affecting their ability to pay attention to lecturers, participate in class discussions, and complete assignments that require high levels of focus. In other words, the impact of staying up late is not only physiological but also affects the quality of students' engagement in their academic lives.

These findings align with recent research on sleep deprivation (Adeniji et al., 2026). Sleep deprivation disrupts the encoding, consolidation, and retrieval processes of memory through impaired hippocampal and prefrontal cortex function. This condition leads to decreased learning ability, reduced working memory capacity, and increased difficulty retaining previously learned information. Therefore, students' experiences of having more difficulty understanding lecture material after staying up late are not merely subjective but have a strong neurobiological basis.

An interesting aspect of this study is the emergence of specific impacts on Quran memorization ability. Most informants active in tahfiz activities admitted that lack of sleep makes memorization slower to take hold, more difficult to maintain, and more easily forgotten. Some students even mentioned that the muraja'ah process, which usually proceeds smoothly, is disrupted when they experience sleep deprivation. These findings demonstrate that the impact of staying up late on FUSI students extends beyond general academic dimensions to religious activities, which are a crucial part of their identity as Islamic studies students.

This experience can be explained through neuroscientific findings regarding the relationship between sleep and memory (Adeniji et al., 2026). The process of long-term memory consolidation is highly dependent on neural activity that occurs during sleep. When sleep duration is reduced, the brain's ability to strengthen and store new information is impaired. In the context of memorization students, this condition has direct implications for the ability to store, repeat, and retain memorization of the Qur'an, which essentially requires intensive and continuous memory processes.

In addition to affecting cognitive function, research findings also indicate changes in emotional states after staying up late. Some informants reported becoming more sensitive, easily offended, less patient, and more prone to stress when facing seemingly minor issues. Some students even stated that lack of sleep made it more difficult for them to control their emotions in interactions with friends and family. These experiences suggest that the impact of staying up late extends beyond declining academic performance to include psychological aspects that affect the quality of students' social relationships.

These findings are consistent with research (Weng et al., 2025) which found that sleep deprivation significantly reduces psychological alertness and affects an individual's emotional stability. Sleep deprivation is known to increase emotional reactivity and reduce self-regulation abilities, making individuals more susceptible to tension, frustration, and mood swings (Xu et al., 2026). Also showed that sleep deprivation is associated with decreased sensorimotor

function, increased mental fatigue, and a worsening ability to maintain attention over long periods of time.

Most informants were aware of the link between sleep deprivation and a decline in the quality of daily activities. They were able to identify that feeling sleepy in class, difficulty understanding material, reduced memorization, and mood swings were direct consequences of their late-night habits. However, this awareness was not strong enough to consistently stop the practice. This phenomenon indicates a tension between knowledge about the negative impacts of staying up late and the actual behavior they maintain in their daily lives.

Based on the overall findings, it can be understood that the culture of staying up late results in a multidimensional erosion of psychosomatic capacity. The impact is not only manifested in the form of physical fatigue, but also affects the cognitive, emotional, and spiritual aspects of students. For FUSI students, decreased sleep quality has direct implications for their ability to learn and memorize the Quran, so that the consequences are not only academic, but also concern the intellectual-religious activities that are characteristic of Islamic educational environments. This finding also provides a bridge to the subsequent discussion regarding the emergence of religious awareness and inner conflict in students when their practice of staying up late confronts the normative understanding of the Quran regarding the function of the night as a space of tranquility and rest.

The Gap between the Ideality of the Qur'an and the Practice of Life (Dissonance)

One of the most interesting findings in this study is the emergence of reflective awareness among students regarding the discrepancy between their late-night lifestyle and the normative view of the Qur'an regarding the function of night and day. Almost all informants demonstrated adequate knowledge regarding the verses of the Qur'an that describe the night as a time of tranquility, rest, and energy recovery, especially QS. al-Qashash [28]: 71-73 and QS. ar-Rum [30]: 23. Allah SWT says:

وَمِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلِعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

“And out of His mercy, He has made for you the night and the day that you may rest in it and seek of His bounty (in the day) and that you may give thanks to Him.” (QS. al-Qashash [28]: 73).

Allah SWT also said:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ مَنَامُكُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَابْتِغَاؤُكُمْ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُسْمَعُونَ

“And among His signs is your sleep by night and by day and your seeking of His bounty. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who listen.” (QS. ar-Rum [30]:

23).

However, this normative understanding does not always align with the practice of daily life. This situation gives rise to a form of theological dissonance, namely the tension between religious knowledge believed in and actual behavior that is consistently carried out. This finding is clearly evident in various statements by informants who admit that they understand the function of the night as a time of rest as taught by the Qur'an, but at the same time continue to practice the habit of sleeping late due to academic demands and digital distractions. One informant stated:

"On the one hand, I understand that the Quran describes night as a time for rest. But on the other hand, my daily habits often lead me to sleep late."

This statement suggests that the primary problem lies not in a lack of religious knowledge, but rather in the gap between normative awareness and the ability to implement those values in daily life. Thus, the phenomenon of staying up late among FUSI students cannot be understood solely as a health behavior issue, but also as an ethical and spiritual issue that touches on dimensions of religious awareness.

From a classical interpretation perspective, the function of night and day has been clearly explained as part of Allah's grace for humans. Interpreting QS. al-Qashash [28]: 71–73, Ibn Kathir explains that night was created so that humans can obtain peace and rest from activities and work, while day is intended for activities, travel, and seeking sustenance. According to him, if the night continues continuously, humans will experience hardship and difficulty, while if the day continues without stopping, the body will experience fatigue due to continuous activity. Therefore, the alternation of night and day is a manifestation of Allah's grace that enables humans to maintain the balance of their lives (Ibn Kathir, 1999).

Al-Maraghi offered a similar interpretation. He emphasized that night is a means of physical recovery after humans undergo various activities during the day. The darkness of the night allows the body to find rest, while the light of day provides conditions that support humans to work and fulfill their life's needs. In Al-Maraghi's view, a balance between activity and rest is a basic requirement for the continuation of a healthy and productive human life (Al-Maraghi, 1946).

A more comprehensive explanation is found in Wahbah al-Zuhaili's Tafsir al-Munir. He interprets the phrase *litaskunū fīhi* as indicating that the night was specifically created to bring tranquility, psychological stability, and recovery from the fatigue of daytime activities. Conversely, the day serves as a space for humans to move, work, travel, and seek sustenance. According to Al-Zuhaili, this division of functions is not merely a cosmological phenomenon, but rather part of a divine design containing wisdom for human well-being (Al-Zuhaili, 2009).

Based on these three interpretations, there appears to be an interpretive consensus that the night serves primarily as a time for biological and psychological restoration. Interestingly, interview results indicate that the majority of students actually understand this message. However, this awareness has not been able to effectively change behavior. This finding demonstrates a phenomenon known in psychology as the attitude-behavior gap, a condition

where individuals hold certain beliefs or attitudes but fail to implement them in real life. A similar phenomenon was also found in research on Generation Z's consumption behavior, where support for sustainable values is often not followed by consistent consumption behavior due to environmental pressures and other psychological factors (Halibas et al., 2025).

In the context of this research, the factors widening this gap stem from two main sources. First, academic demands that encourage students to sacrifice sleep to complete assignments and other course obligations. Second, the existence of digital technology that provides various forms of entertainment and social interaction without time limits. The combination of these two factors results in a situation where students know what they should do but lack the control to do it consistently. The following table summarizes the forms of theological dissonance identified in the research.

Table 4. Forms of Theological Dissonance of FUSI Students Related to the Habit of Staying Up Late

Normative Awareness	Actual Practice	Forms of Dissonance
Night is a time for rest (sakan).	Staying up late due to academic assignments	Conflict between academic obligations and biological needs
Sleep is part of the body's mandate.	Intentionally reducing sleep duration	Conflict between health values and productivity
Memorizing the Quran requires good physical condition.	Staying up late can reduce the quality of memorization	Conflict between spiritual goals and lifestyle
The Quran teaches balance in life.	Irregular lifestyle	Conflict between religious ideals and everyday reality

An equally important finding is the emergence of a collective awareness for change. Most informants admitted to having attempted to improve their sleep patterns through various strategies, such as limiting cell phone use before bed, establishing a more regular daily schedule, reducing social media activity at night, and completing assignments early to avoid a buildup of workload as deadlines approach. While the success rates varied, the existence of these efforts suggests that students do not fully accept the culture of staying up late as ideal.

This phenomenon indicates a process of self-reflection that develops from negative experiences resulting from sleep deprivation. Within a phenomenological framework, this reflection can be understood as an existential awareness that emerges after individuals experience the direct consequences of their behavior. The impacts, such as decreased concentration, reduced memorization quality, physical fatigue, and emotional disturbances, are factors

that drive students to re-evaluate their lifestyles.

Interestingly, the orientation for change emerging from the informants was not solely based on health considerations but also rooted in the concept of life balance derived from Islamic teachings. Several students explicitly linked the need to improve sleep patterns to the concept of *tawazun* (balance), the principle of maintaining harmony between physical, intellectual, and spiritual needs. From this perspective, sleep is no longer seen simply as a biological need but also as part of a religious responsibility to safeguard the body's trust given by God.

Thus, the essence of the findings in this theme demonstrates that FUSI students' experiences of staying up late occur within a complex negotiation space between the demands of modern life and their inherent religious awareness. Although the practice of staying up late has become an inescapable part of academic and digital culture, theological awareness continues to function as a moral control mechanism, continually reminding students of the importance of maintaining a balanced life. This awareness is an important capital for the emergence of restorative motivation to restore the function of the night as outlined in the Qur'an, namely as a space of calm, recovery, and preparation for productive activities during the day.

The Meeting Point of Academic and Digital Activities with Qur'anic Awareness

A phenomenological analysis of the experiences of thirty students from the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Studies at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra (UIN North Sumatra) shows that the culture of staying up late cannot be understood simply as a matter of time management or poor sleeping habits. This phenomenon is a social construct formed through a complex interaction between academic demands, the penetration of digital technology, the biological consequences experienced by the body, and the theological awareness of students as learners of Islamic sciences. Therefore, the experience of staying up late as emerged in this study is more appropriately understood as an ongoing process of existential negotiation between the various demands of contemporary life and the normative values believed in.

Research findings indicate that the night has undergone a transformation in meaning among university students. In the normative construction of the Qur'an, the night is positioned as a space that brings tranquility, physical recovery, and psychological stability (Al-Maraghi, 1946). However, in the reality of student life, the night is redefined as a space for academic productivity and digital consumption. Final assignments, organizational activities, social media, digital entertainment services, and online communication make the night the time period considered most effective for work and enjoyment. This change in function shows how digital modernity is slowly shifting the natural rhythm of life previously described in religious texts.

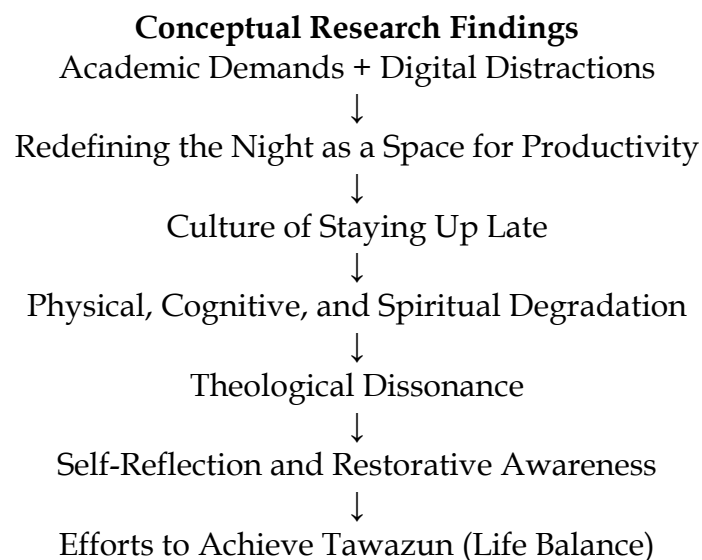
However, this redefinition of the night's function did not come without consequences. All informants described various negative impacts that emerged after repeatedly staying up late. These impacts included physical fatigue, decreased concentration, emotional disturbances, and even a weakened ability to memorize the Quran. These findings align with various contemporary

neuroscience studies showing that sleep deprivation disrupts the encoding, consolidation, and retrieval processes of memory due to decreased function of the hippocampus and prefrontal cortex (Adeniji et al., 2026). Other studies have also shown that sleep deprivation increases sensorimotor fatigue, worsens attention, and decreases an individual's emotional stability (Weng et al., 2025). Thus, the subjective experiences of students receive strong confirmation from empirical findings in the fields of health and neuroscience.

However, the most distinctive characteristic of the phenomenon discovered in this study lies in the emergence of a reflective-religious dimension not always found in the general student population. As students studying the Quran, tafsir, hadith, and Islamic sciences, the informants have a relatively high awareness of Islamic teachings on the importance of maintaining a balanced life. This awareness gives rise to feelings of discomfort when their daily behavior conflicts with their religious beliefs. In this context, staying up late is not simply a biological activity, but a moral experience that prompts continuous self-evaluation.

These findings indicate a phenomenon known as theological cognitive dissonance, a condition where individuals recognize a discrepancy between their theological beliefs and their daily practices. Unlike the concept of cognitive dissonance developed in social psychology and focused on the discrepancy between attitudes and behavior, the dissonance found in this study is rooted in the conflict between perceived religious values and the demands of modern life faced daily. In the experience of FUSI students, this conflict arises when the concept of the night as a resting space clashes with the need to complete academic assignments or the urge to stay connected to the digital world.

Based on the overall data, the relationships between themes can be formulated into the following conceptual model.



This model demonstrates that students' experiences do not stop with the negative impacts of sleep deprivation. Instead, these consequences trigger a process of reflection that leads them to a conscious need for change. In

phenomenological terms, the lived suffering caused by staying up late becomes the starting point for a new awareness of the importance of maintaining a balance between academic needs, physical health, and spiritual responsibilities.

Thus, the essence of FUSI students' experiences regarding the culture of staying up late can be formulated as a struggle to maintain a balance between academic productivity, digital connectivity, and the spiritual mandate of the body. Staying up late is not understood as a completely freely chosen behavior, but rather as a form of adaptation to the pressures of an increasingly intense academic environment and digital culture. Furthermore, students' religious understanding serves as a moral control mechanism, continually reminding them of the importance of restoring the function of the night as outlined in the Quran.

These findings demonstrate that the problem of staying up late among Islamic studies students cannot be resolved solely through health or time management approaches. More effective interventions require the integration of sleep hygiene education, more proportionate academic load management, healthy digital literacy, and the internalization of Quranic values of life balance. In this way, the concept of *tawazun* (religious harmony) will not only exist as a normative ideal in religious texts but can also be realized as a practical reality in students' lives.

Tawazun as an Integrative Theoretical Framework

The concept of *tawazun* emerges as the central theoretical contribution of this study. *Tawazun* does not merely refer to moderation in a general sense, but represents a holistic balance between biological well-being, intellectual productivity, and spiritual responsibility. The findings reveal that students experience tension because these three dimensions are often pursued separately. Academic achievement encourages prolonged wakefulness, digital engagement provides temporary gratification, while spiritual awareness continuously reminds students of the Qur'anic ideal of balance.

From the perspective of Qur'anic anthropology, human beings are entrusted with maintaining harmony between bodily needs and spiritual obligations. Sleep therefore should not be understood solely as a physiological necessity but also as an ethical responsibility. *Tawazun* offers a conceptual bridge that integrates contemporary scientific understanding of sleep with Qur'anic teachings regarding the function of night as a space of *sakan* (tranquility), restoration, and preparation for productive daytime activity.

Consequently, *tawazun* can be positioned as an integrative framework for understanding how Muslim students negotiate modern academic pressures without neglecting their physical health and spiritual development.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the phenomenon of staying up late among students of the Qur'anic Sciences and Tafsir Study Program is not merely a matter of individual sleep habits, but a socio-religious phenomenon shaped by the interaction of academic demands, digital culture, and religious consciousness. The findings demonstrate that students reconstruct the meaning of night from a

period of rest and tranquility into a productive space for academic activities and digital engagement. This transformation subsequently generates multidimensional consequences, including physical fatigue, reduced concentration, emotional instability, and decreased quality of Qur'anic memorization.

A significant finding of this study is the emergence of theological dissonance, namely the tension between students' understanding of Qur'anic teachings regarding the function of the night and their actual daily practices. Although students recognize that the Qur'an positions the night as a space for rest, recovery, and serenity, academic pressures and digital distractions often encourage behaviors that contradict these values. This finding confirms that the culture of staying up late among Muslim students involves an ongoing negotiation between religious ideals and contemporary life realities.

The theoretical contribution of this research lies in the development of a phenomenological understanding of staying-up-late culture within the framework of Living Qur'an studies. Unlike previous studies that predominantly examine sleep deprivation from health, psychological, or behavioral perspectives, this research highlights the role of Qur'anic values as ethical references that continue to be interpreted, negotiated, and contested in students' everyday experiences. Furthermore, the study proposes the concept of *tawazun* (balance) as an integrative framework that connects biological well-being, academic productivity, and spiritual responsibility in the context of modern student life.

Practically, the findings imply the need for collaborative efforts among educational institutions, lecturers, and students. Universities may strengthen sleep-health literacy programs and promote healthier academic scheduling. Lecturers are encouraged to design learning activities and assignment deadlines that support balanced study patterns, while students need to develop better time-management strategies and healthier digital consumption habits. Integrating Qur'anic values concerning balance and responsible use of time may also contribute to fostering healthier lifestyles among Muslim students.

This study is not without limitations. The research was conducted only among students of the Faculty of Ushuluddin and Islamic Studies at UIN Sumatera Utara using a qualitative phenomenological approach, which limits the generalizability of the findings to broader student populations. In addition, the study relied primarily on self-reported experiences, which may be influenced by subjective perceptions and recall bias.

Therefore, future research is recommended to involve participants from different academic disciplines and institutions to obtain a broader understanding of staying-up-late culture among university students. Quantitative or mixed-method approaches may also be employed to examine the relationship between sleep patterns, academic performance, digital media use, and religious awareness more comprehensively. Further studies are also encouraged to explore the implementation of the *tawazun* framework as a practical intervention model for promoting healthier and more balanced student lifestyles in the digital era.

REFERENCES

- Adeniji, K. O., Igado, O. O., Olopade, F. E., & Femi-Akinlosotu, O. M. (2026). Sleep Deprivation and Memory: A Neurobiological Perspective. *IBRO Neuroscience Reports*, 20, 170–180. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibneur.2026.01.010>
- Al-Maraghi, A. M. (1946). *Tafsir Al-Maraghi* (1st ed.). Cairo, Egypt: Sharikat Maktabah wa Mathba'ah Musthafa al-Babi al-Halabi wa Awladihi.
- Al-Zuhaili, W. (2009). *Al-Tafsir al-Munir fi al-'Aqidah wa al-Shari'ah wa al-Manhaj* (10th ed.). Damascus, Syria: Dar al-Fikr.
- Al'Farisi, S., Andreansyah, S., Imadin, S. N., Saputro, Z. A., Sirait, U. A., & Rizkianfi, M. W. (2025). Pengaruh Olahraga Terhadap Kesehatan Mental Gen-Z. *Jumper: Jurnal Mahasiswa Pendidikan Olahraga*, 6(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.55081/jumper.v6i1.3312>
- Bado, B., Tahir, T., & Supatminingsih, T. (2023). Studi Social Climber Gen-Z dan Perilaku Ekonominya. *Journal of Economic Education and Entrepreneurship Studies*, 4(1), 503–526. <https://doi.org/10.26858/je3s.v4i1.396>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2022). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (6th Editio). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- DataReportal. (2025). Digital 2025: Indonesia. Retrieved June 23, 2026, from <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2025-indonesia>
- Halibas, A., Akram, U., Hoang, A.-P., & Hoang, M. D. T. (2025). Unveiling the Future of Responsible, Sustainable, and Ethical Consumption: A Bibliometric Study on Gen Z and Young Consumers. *Young Consumers: Insight and Ideas for Responsible Marketers*, 26(7), 142–171. <https://doi.org/10.1108/YC-11-2024-2327>
- Husna, A. H., & Mairita, D. (2024). Gen Z dan Perilaku Konsumsi Konten Influencer pada TikTok. *Jurnal Riset Komunikasi*, 7(1), 86–100. <https://doi.org/10.38194/jurkom.v7i1.1002>
- Ibn Kathir, I. bin 'Umar. (1999). *Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-'Azhim* (2nd ed.; S. bin M. Al-Salamah, Ed.). Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Dar Thayyibah (دار طيبة).
- Khair, A. F. A., & Usiono. (2025). Pengaruh Pola Hidup Terhadap Kesehatan Mahasiswa. *JURNAL ILMIAH NUSANTARA*, 2(2), 48–54. <https://doi.org/10.61722/jinu.v2i2.3536>
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological Research Methods* (1st ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Mustaqim, A. (2017). *Metode Penelitian Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* (1st ed.). Yogyakarta: Idea Press.
- Owens, J. (2014). Insufficient Sleep in Adolescents and Young Adults: An Update on Causes and Consequences. *Pediatrics*, 134(3), 921–932. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2014-1696>
- Rif'ah, S., Nazla, T., Rizqiannor, M., Nofriansyah, M., Putri, E., Fatmasari, E., ... Fajeriyati, N. (2024). Dampak Buruk Sering Tidur Larut Malam Bagi Kesehatan Akibat Gadget pada Siswa-Siswi Sekolah Menengah Pertama di Kota Banjarmasin. *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Bangsa*, 1(12), 3706–3710.

- <https://doi.org/10.59837/jpmba.v1i12.768>
- Tarokh, L., Saletin, J. M., & Carskadon, M. A. (2016). Sleep in Adolescence: Physiology, Cognition and Mental Health. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, 70, 182–188. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neubiorev.2016.08.008>
- Twenge, J. M. (2017). *iGen: Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy – and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood* (1st ed.). New York: Atria Books.
- Walker, M. P. (2017). *Why We Sleep: The New Science of Sleep and Dreams* (First Scri). New York: Scribner.
- Wang, Y., Huam, H. T., & Hamid, A. B. A. (2025). Virtual Influencer Effects in China's Gen Z Market: How Core Characteristics and Dual Moderation Shape Purchase Intentions. *Acta Psychologica*, 259, 105477. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.105477>
- Weng, X., Wen, K., Guo, J., Zhang, P., Zhang, Y., Cao, Q., ... Xu, F. (2025). The Impact of Sleep Deprivation on the Functional Connectivity of Visual-Related Brain Regions. *Sleep Medicine*, 125, 155–167. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sleep.2024.11.026>
- Xu, L., Peng, L., An, X., Zhong, X., Shao, Y., Dong, Y., & Fu, W. (2026). Sleep Deprivation Disrupts Postural Balance and Sensorimotor Integration: A Combined Psychophysiological–Behavioral Analysis. *NeuroImage*, 325. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuroimage.2025.121667>
- Zis, S. F., Effendi, N., & Roem, E. R. (2021). Perubahan Perilaku Komunikasi Generasi Milenial dan Generasi Z di Era Digital. *Satwika: Kajian Ilmu Budaya Dan Perubahan Sosial*, 5(1), 69–87. <https://doi.org/10.22219/satwika.v5i1.15550>