

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# QUIET STUDENTS IN THE DIGITAL EDUCATION ERA: LITERATURE ANALYSIS ON SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES AND PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING STRATEGIES

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## ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of quiet students has become increasingly evident in today's era of digital education. The transformation from face-to-face learning to online modes has significantly influenced students' social and emotional conditions, particularly among those who are more vulnerable to social anxiety, low learning motivation, and reduced academic engagement. This study aims to explore the psychological and pedagogical factors contributing to the emergence of quiet students in digital learning contexts, as well as to formulate appropriate psychological mentoring strategies. The research employs a literature analysis method, focusing on five recent studies related to social anxiety, learning motivation, digital literacy, and student engagement in online learning. The findings reveal that quiet students in digital environments often face communication barriers, low self-confidence, and a lack of emotional support from academic settings. Additional challenges arise from limited digital literacy and insufficiently interactive teaching methods. Empathic mentoring strategies grounded in Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, Lazarus's coping stress framework, and Goleman's emotional intelligence model are applied to develop psychological approaches.

**Keywords:** *quiet students, digital education, social anxiety, digital literacy, psychological mentoring.*

## INTRODUCTION

The transformation of digital education has significantly changed the way students learn and interact. During the Covid-19 pandemic, online learning emerged as the primary solution to ensure the continuity of education at various levels (Oktawirawan, 2020). Although digital learning offers high flexibility and unlimited access to educational resources, not all students are able to adapt effectively. Many experience psychological pressure such as anxiety, stress, and difficulty in communication. Students who are more introverted, commonly referred to as *quiet students*, represent the most vulnerable group when facing the demands of an online learning system that requires active participation.

Various studies indicate that online learning can trigger increased social anxiety while simultaneously reducing learning motivation. Oktawirawan (2020) explains that students feel pressured due to difficulty understanding the material, limited internet access, and an overload of assignments. A study by Husen, Putra, and Riswira (2024) further shows that the social

anxiety experienced by students directly affects their participation in collaborative online classroom activities. Additionally, Rahmah and Pradikto (2025) found that minimal social interaction and monotonous teaching methods lead to reduced emotional engagement in the learning process. This suggests that technological advancement does not entirely align with students' psychological readiness to adapt.

This condition becomes a serious concern as it reveals a mismatch between technological capability and students' socio-emotional capacity in coping with digital learning demands. Based on Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory, an individual's belief in their abilities influences their thinking, behavior, and response to pressure. Students with low self-efficacy tend to avoid participation and exhibit passive behavior in online learning. Meanwhile, Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) coping stress theory explains that individuals who fail to employ adaptive stress-management strategies are more prone to emotional exhaustion and social withdrawal. Goleman (1995) emphasizes that emotional

intelligence plays an essential role in helping individuals understand, manage, and express emotions in healthy ways—particularly when communication and empathy are required in digital learning environments.

Furthermore, the social dimension of learning is elaborated by Vygotsky (1978) through social constructivism, which posits that learning occurs through social interaction and environmental support. When interaction is diminished in online contexts, students lose opportunities to learn collaboratively, resulting in declining self-confidence and engagement. Humanistic theory by Rogers (1980) also stresses the importance of providing an emotionally safe learning environment that allows students to develop and feel comfortable expressing themselves.

Taking these findings into account, digital learning should not only focus on cognitive and technological aspects but must also prioritize students' psychological well-being. The quiet-student issue is not merely a communication problem; it reflects a complex interplay of psychological factors, including social anxiety, motivation, and emotional support. Therefore, this article aims to analyze socio-emotional factors influencing quiet-student behavior in the digital era, examine the role of digital literacy and emotional intelligence in online learning participation, and formulate psychological support strategies that teachers and educational counselors can implement to help quiet students become more active and confident.

## METHOD

This study employed a literature review approach to gain deep insights into the phenomenon under investigation without collecting primary field data. According to Snyder (2019), a literature review is a systematic approach aimed at identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing previous research findings to build comprehensive theoretical understandings. In educational psychology, this approach is particularly important for evaluating theories and empirical findings related to learning behavior, motivation, and student mental well-being (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The analysis included five academic articles published between 2020 and 2025, focusing on themes such as online learning, social anxiety, digital literacy, and learning motivation. Each article was analyzed thematically using a

conceptual synthesis approach to identify patterns, gaps, and conceptual relationships. Theoretical foundations from Bandura (1997), Lazarus and Folkman (1984), Goleman (1995), Vygotsky (1978), and Rogers (1980) were used as conceptual frameworks to explain the psychological mechanisms underlying quiet-student behavior in digital learning contexts, as well as to formulate relevant psychological intervention strategies.

## RESULTS

Analysis of the five selected articles revealed that the quiet-student phenomenon in digital learning is strongly associated with three primary factors: social anxiety, learning motivation, and emotional support. The greatest challenges faced by quiet students appear in communication and social interaction, worsened by low digital literacy and non-interactive teaching approaches.

Table 1. Meta-Analysis of Literature Review

Theme	Main Findings	Sources
Social Anxiety	Students fear making mistakes and receiving negative judgment, resulting in reluctance to participate in online classes.	Oktawirawan (2020); Husen et al. (2024)
Learning Motivation	Limited interaction and heavy coursework decrease motivation.	Rahmah & Pradikto (2025); Meilinda et al. (2025)
Digital Literacy	Lack of digital skills hinders active participation in e-learning.	Karima et al. (2024); Meilinda et al. (2025)
Emotional Support	Lack of empathy and attention from teachers causes student withdrawal.	Husen et al. (2024)
Coping Strategies	Students cope through prayer, discussion, relaxation or techniques.	Oktawirawan (2020); Rahmah & Pradikto (2025)

## DISCUSSION

The literature review indicates that quiet students in online learning represent a multidimensional phenomenon involving psychological, social, and technological factors. The most prominent finding is the high level of social anxiety experienced during online learning. Students fear making mistakes, negative evaluation from teachers and peers, and discomfort in expressing opinions in virtual spaces. This aligns with Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory: students with low belief in their abilities tend to withdraw from social-academic situations to protect themselves from judgment.

Consistent with this, Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) coping theory explains that students lacking effective coping strategies often experience emotional exhaustion and retreat from interaction. Meanwhile, those who apply adaptive coping strategies—such as planning, teamwork, and seeking guidance—show improved academic participation.

Another significant finding concerns the role of digital literacy. Students who struggle with technology experience anxiety and reduced self-confidence, which then diminishes participation—supporting Vygotsky's (1978) argument that learning requires social scaffolding. Without this support, quiet students lose opportunities to engage within their Zone of Proximal Development.

Low motivation also plays a major role. Monotonous learning environments, minimal feedback, and emotional disconnection contribute to student disengagement. Rogers' (1980) humanistic framework posits that learning motivation increases when individuals feel accepted unconditionally—yet many students do not receive this emotional reinforcement.

Goleman (1995) highlights the importance of emotional intelligence in online learning. Students with strong self-awareness, emotional regulation, and empathy adapt better to academic pressure and online social interactions. Conversely, those with lower emotional intelligence are more susceptible to stress and tend to disengage.

Integrating the theoretical perspectives of Bandura, Lazarus, Goleman, Vygotsky, and Rogers provides a comprehensive picture: successful digital learning requires balanced

attention to cognitive, emotional, and social development.

Quiet students are not incapable; rather, they require supportive environments, emotional validation, and learning methods aligned with their psychological needs. Appropriate interventions may include reflective mentoring, virtual group counseling, and peer-assisted learning to help them gradually develop confidence and social skills.

## CONCLUSION

This literature review reveals that the quiet-student phenomenon in digital learning goes far beyond passive behavior and reflects complex social and psychological dynamics. Quiet students often struggle with social anxiety, low self-confidence, and difficulty adapting to online learning systems that demand active interaction. These challenges are intensified by low digital literacy, insufficient emotional support from teachers and peers, and non-interactive learning designs.

Theoretical integration shows that:

- Bandura emphasizes strengthening self-efficacy
- Lazarus highlights adaptive coping strategies
- Goleman stresses emotional intelligence development

Thus, effective psychological support strategies must incorporate cognitive, emotional, and social interventions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Practically, educators and counselors must create an inclusive digital learning atmosphere that prioritizes student psychological well-being. Teachers can apply Vygotsky's scaffolding strategy, gradually encouraging quiet students to participate—from small groups to larger discussions. Educational institutions should also provide training in digital literacy and emotional skills to help students face the challenges of modern academic demands.

Future research is encouraged to conduct empirical studies testing the effectiveness of psychological interventions based on self-efficacy and emotional intelligence in increasing participation among quiet students. Further

studies may also explore the influence of cultural and gender factors on student expression in digital spaces.

Ultimately, the success of digital education should not be measured solely by technological advancement or academic performance, but also by its ability to form emotionally supportive and adaptive learning environments—empowering all students, including those who are quiet, to thrive optimally.

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