

BURNOUT SOCIETY: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF RISING SUICIDE RATES IN INDONESIA

Masyarakat Burnout: Tinjauan Kritis Terhadap Meningkatnya Angka Bunuh Diri di Indonesia

Gregory Yehezkiel Marhaendra* 

Faculty of Philosophy, Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: greykiel11@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: January 12th, 2026

Review:

From January 20th, 2026

Accepted: August 03rd, 2026

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License

ABSTRACT

Background: Suicide cases in Indonesia have increased by 21.73% between 2021 and 2024. This indicates the need for new theoretical explanations to address this public mental health crisis. **Purpose:** To build an interpretive framework using Byung-Chul Han's theory of 'burnout society' that is sensitive to the psychological stress of contemporary life and the specific issue of suicide in Indonesia. **Methods:** integrates Han's theory of burnout society with data from the Indonesian Statistics Agency and purposively selected scientific literature, excluding irrelevant sources. Using Fernandez's three-stage model (assemble, arrange, assess) and Bakker's abduction. **Results:** The transition to a neoliberal achievement society facilitated by the digital panopticon and psychopolitics creates dynamics that internalize failure, leading to burnout, alienation, depression, and ultimately, suicide. **Conclusion:** Suicide is a pathological symptom of a social imperative that commands achievement but systematically hinders its fulfillment, necessitating solutions to address this underlying psych political imperative. Hence, Han recommends the *vita contemplativa*—a life dedicated to deep, aimless contemplation as the antithesis to the problem of suicide.

Keywords: burnout society, psychopolitics, *vita contemplativa*, suicide rate, mental health

ABSTRAK

Latar Belakang: Kasus bunuh diri di Indonesia mengalami peningkatan sebesar 21,73% antara tahun 2021 dan 2024. Hal ini menunjukkan, perlunya penjelasan teoritis baru dalam menghadapi krisis kesehatan mental masyarakat ini. **Tujuan:** Membangun kerangka interpretatif menggunakan teori Byung-Chul Han tentang 'masyarakat burnout' yang peka terhadap tekanan psikologis kehidupan kontemporer dan isu bunuh diri spesifik di Indonesia. **Metode:** mengintegrasikan teori masyarakat kelelahan (burnout society) Han dengan data badan pusat statistik Indonesia dan literatur ilmiah yang dipilih secara purposif, dengan mengecualikan sumber yang tidak relevan. Dengan menggunakan model tiga tahap Fernandez (mengumpulkan, mengatur, menilai) dan abduksi Bakker. **Hasil:** Transisi menuju masyarakat pencapaian neoliberal yang difasilitasi oleh panoptikon digital dan psikopolitik dengan menciptakan dinamika yang menginternalisasikan kegagalan dengan mengarah pada burnout, alienasi, depresi, dan pada akhirnya, bunuh diri. **Kesimpulan:** Bunuh diri adalah gejala patologis dari imperatif sosial yang memerintahkan pencapaian namun menghalangi pemenuhannya secara sistematis, sehingga diperlukan solusi dalam mengatasi psikopolitik yang mendasar ini. Dalam menghadapi krisis ini, Han merekomendasikan *vita contemplativa*—sebuah bentuk kehidupan yang didedikasikan untuk berkontemplasi secara mendalam dan tanpa tujuan sebagai antitesis terhadap masalah bunuh diri.

Kata Kunci: masyarakat burnout, psikopolitik, *vita contemplativa*, tingkat bunuh diri, kesehatan mental

INTRODUCTION

Suicide is a major global public health challenge, with the World Health Organization estimating over 700,000 deaths annually. It is the fourth leading cause of death among individuals aged 15–29, with 77% of these deaths occurring in lower-middle-income countries (WHO, 2021). The etiology of suicide is complex, arising from a combination of social, biological, psychological, and environmental factors that accumulate over the lifespan (IASC, 2022). Global patterns show significant variations by region, age, sex, and also underlining the nature of suicide as a socio-demographic and epidemiological phenomenon shaped by regional history, economic crises, and social change. These patterns also highlight the persistent challenges of measurement in low-resource contexts (IASC, 2022; WHO, 2021).

Recent data from Indonesia revealed this global concern with national scope.

Indonesian Statistics Agency (BPS, 2025) showed 21.73% increase in recorded suicides between 2021 and 2024. This increase was characterized by marked social and spatial inequalities, with a higher prevalence of behavioral and emotional problems observed among economically vulnerable groups. It included those with low education, informal workers, women, divorced individuals, and residents of poor rural areas with minimal infrastructure. Further analysis identifies substantial gaps in mental health service provision, concentrated in urban centers, unstable livelihoods, and societal stigma as key risk factors, particularly in eastern provinces such as Papua, East Nusa Tenggara, and other rural areas (BPS, 2025). These empirical make Indonesia as an important case study for examining how structural inequalities and geographic location interact to shape suicide risk, as shown in Figure 1.

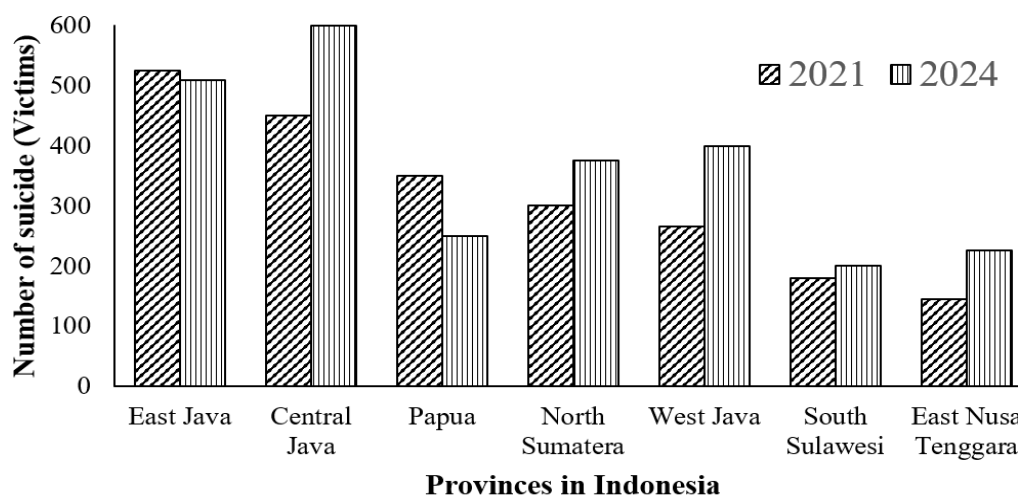


Figure 1. Number of Suicide (Including Attempted Suicides) in the 7 Provinces with the Most Cases in Indonesia.
Source: BPS (2025)

Existing research on suicide in Indonesia has predominantly employed epidemiological and psychological approaches, focusing on risk factor identification, clinical interventions, and quantitative correlations between socio-

demographic variables and suicidal behavior (BPS, 2025). Although extremely helpful, these studies usually follow positivist paradigms that see suicide as a single disease or a group of distinct risk factors, frequently ignoring the larger sociostructural changes

influencing modern Indonesian culture. Mostly, sociological and psychological analyses of suicide remain heavily influenced by Durkheim's foundational framework of anomie and social integration (Almaidah *et al.*, 2023; Mueller *et al.*, 2021; Rona, 2025). Suicide emerges from a lack of social integration—a form of negativity where the absence of collective bonds and moral regulation leaves the individual isolated and vulnerable. This theory was crucial for comprehending suicide in social media-connected societies where the decline of traditional institutions left social gaps that people were unable to fill. However, the contemporary landscape presents a fundamentally different pathological configuration. The problem is no longer primarily one of social absence or normative vacuum, but rather one of social excess—an overwhelming surfeit of imperatives, stimuli, and expectations that bombards the individual ceaselessly.

The theoretical work of Byung-Chul Han provided a powerful framework for diagnosing these conditions. Han (2015), in his *Burnout Society*, characterized late-modernity as an achievement-driven regime where the individual becomes an "entrepreneur of the self." This paradigm change, from the external disciplinary "should" to the internalized, boundless "can," forces self-optimization and continuous performance. Han argued that this leads to a state of auto-exploitation, where individuals willingly exhaust themselves, corroded social bonds and transforming freedom into a covert form of domination. The resulting pathologies were neurological and psychic—such as burnout, depression, and attention deficits—which create conditions conducive to psychic collapse. His related concept of psychopolitics further illustrated how digital technologies harness subjectivity for productivity, intensifying these auto-exploitative dynamics (Han, 2017).

However, Han's idea was still rarely used as an analysis in examining suicide cases.

Thus, this study takes Han's *Burnout Society* as its theoretical object and situates it against the material object of suicide in Indonesia. By integrating Han's diagnosis of how modernity's psychopolitical dynamics produce conditions of burnout with Indonesia's empirical profile of structural inequality, this research aims to construct an interpretive framework that is sensitive to both the psychic pressures of contemporary life and suicide rate issue, also to provide solutions.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed qualitative method with a philosophical research method developed by Bakker *et al.*, (2011), utilizing a descriptive qualitative design with a critical review approach. This approach was appropriate for synthesizing diverse bodies of literature to construct a novel theoretical framework. A critical review allowed for the evaluation and creative integration of theoretical concepts with empirical data to generate new interpretive insights (Carnwell *et al.*, 2001). This design enabled the study to move beyond describing what is known to proposing how we should understand a complex social phenomenon like suicide through a new theoretical lens.

Sample

The sample was purposively selected to include two categories: the formal object, principally the works of Byung-Chul Han (Han, 2015; Han, 2017; Han, 2018; Han, 2024) and the material object, including data from Statistics Indonesia (BPS, 2025) about suicide rate, and peer-reviewed scholarly literature on Indonesian social contexts published between 2015-2025 focusing on mental health, digital culture, and socio-

economic inequality. Irrelevant, non-academic, or outdated sources were excluded, ensuring a focused and authoritative review (Jesson *et al.*, 2011) as a strategy in collecting articles.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

Figure 1 illustrated the integrated methodological framework combining Fernandez (2019) three-stage critical review process with Bakker's induction-deduction procedure for data collection and analysis. Stage 1 (Assemble), the formal object (Byung-Chul Han's theoretical texts) and material object (BPS data and Indonesian scholarly literature) were systematically identified and obtained. Stage 2 (Arrange) involved double coding processes: deductive coding extracted Han's analytical constructs (achievement society, psychopolitics,

positive violence, double bind, *vita contemplativa*) and as a theoretical framework, inductive coding identified empirical themes from the BPS data (spatial inequality, exposure to digital aspirations, mental health service gaps, cultural taboos). Both were organized into a structured summary matrix. Stage 3 (Assess) employed abductive synthesis (Bakker *et al.*, 2011) which was a gradual, step by step through a series of cycles between deductive theory and inductive data. This stage systematically mapped Han's constructions to empirical themes through constant refinement. On the other hand, abductive process yielded the core conclusion of a "burnout society" as the primary psych political mechanism linking neoliberal modernization to rising suicide patterns in Indonesia.

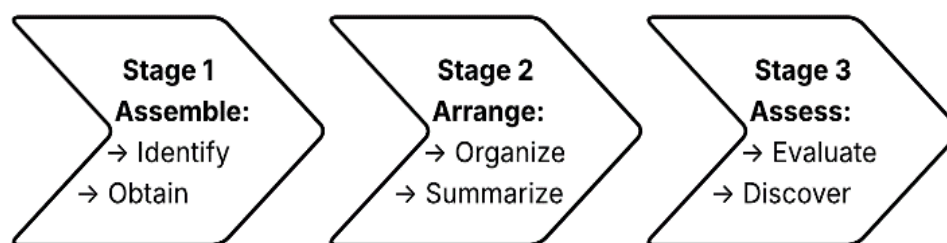


Figure 2. Critical review procedure
 Source: Fernandez (2019)

Ethical Clearance

Since this research involved only the analysis of published texts and publicly available statistical data from official government sources, no formal ethics clearance was required. All sources were properly cited, and no human participants were directly involved, so informed consent was not required. This research adhered to standards of academic integrity in handling and presenting all source material.

RESULT

A systematic qualitative synthesis of Byung-Chul Han's theoretical work and Indonesian empirical data revealed a

coherent set of findings regarding the psychosocial drivers of rising suicide rates. The analysis suggested that Indonesia's digital ecosystem operates as a psych political apparatus, characterized by voluntary participatory surveillance through platforms like TikTok and Instagram. The data demonstrated that algorithmically curated feeds disseminate a homogenous stream of aspirational content—featuring success stories, luxurious lifestyles, and motivational narratives toward users across diverse geographic and socioeconomic contexts (which is from urban to rural). This digital exposure created a universal "ego ideal" that was systematically disconnected

from local realities of resource scarcity and limited opportunities (Iwana *et al.*, 2022).

Simultaneously, the data reflected a social shift that aligned with Han's diagnosis of an "achievement society." The internalized, positive imperative of "You can do it" has replaced the ban on external discipline as a result of Indonesia's rapid neoliberal modernization, which emphasizes individual work and self-reliance. The data on societal vulnerability, however, reveals a striking paradox: the most severe structural

barriers, such as unstable livelihoods, food insecurity, and a severe lack of mental health services, coexist with the populations that face the greatest achievement pressures, such as informal workers, people with low levels of education, and residents of underdeveloped regions like Southeast Papua New Guinea, as well as rural areas. This reality created a documented "double dilemma," which societal imperatives to achieve, collide with systemic barriers to fulfillment (Rakhmani *et al.*, 2025).

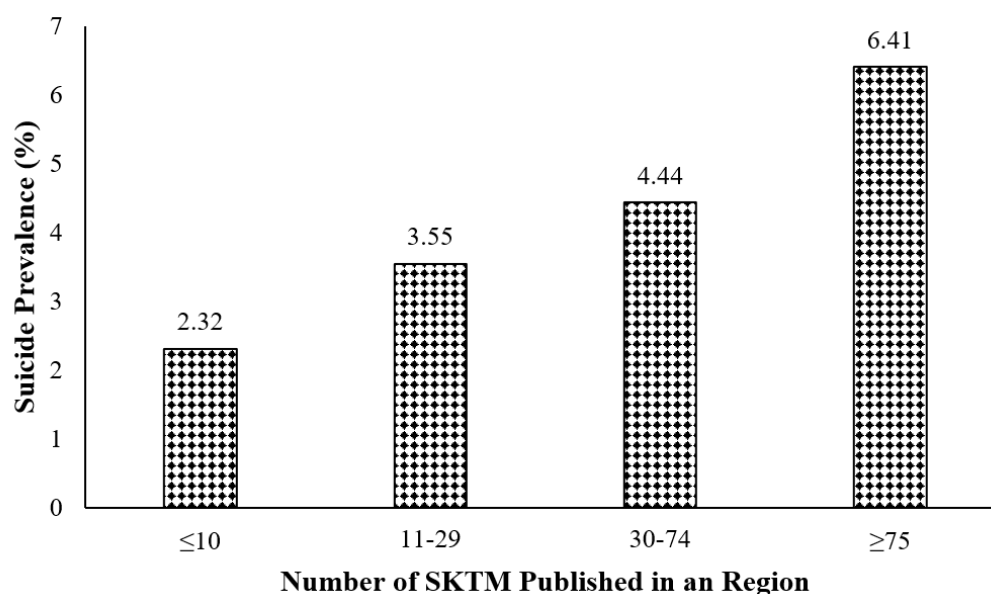


Figure 3. Suicide Case Prevalence Percentage Based on the Number of SKTMs Published in a Region
Source: BPS (2025)

Finally, these findings underscore how these psych political issues were powerfully amplified by structural deficiencies between rural and urban areas. Severe deficits in mental health care outside of major cities, coupled with pervasive cultural stigma, hinder access to communal or professional help (BPS, 2025). As a result, individuals were left in isolated "impoverished attachment," where suffering is silenced and auto-aggressive thoughts intensify, creating the conditions for suicide

as an instant escape (Han, 2015). Figure 4 confirmed this mechanism, showing higher suicide rates in rural areas—precisely where infrastructure deficits, service gaps, and stigma were most acute. Hence, the rural-urban divided empirically validates the study's core argument, which structural deprivation systematically exacerbates the pressures of achievement-oriented societies, pushing vulnerable populations toward suicide.

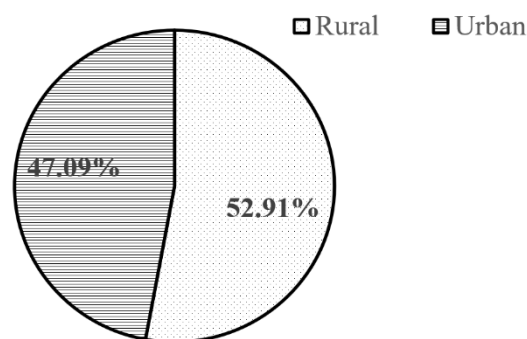


Figure 4. Percentage of Suicide (Including Attempted Suicides) in Indonesia Based on Regions in 2024.
 Source: BPS (2025)

DISCUSSION

This study introduces the concept of a "burnout society" in the Indonesian context, proposing a novel link between neoliberal modernization and rising suicide rates. Besides that, it extends Byung-Chul Han's philosophical framework beyond its European origins, offering alternatives to both classical Durkheimian anomie and purely epidemiological explanations. Empirically, the analysis is based on the latest national data (BPS, 2025) while remaining sensitive to the contexts of Indonesia's diverse regions—from the "aspiration-driven cruelty" of Papua to the highly competitive saturation of Java. From a practical standpoint, it suggests local wisdom-based, culturally grounded solutions that go beyond Western paradigms.

However, these contributions must be considered alongside the study's limitations. This study offers a theoretical perspective and presents no new empirical data. Because it relies on BPS data, it cannot fully reflect the lived experiences behind the numbers, which future ethnographic research or in-depth interviews could explore. To turn these theoretical recommendations into real programs, pilot studies are needed. For example, researchers could revive traditional rituals as safe communal spaces in Papua, start Sabbath initiatives to reduce

performance anxiety, or study how the decline of local wisdom (gotong royong) relates to mental health outcomes. Despite these limitations, this study provides a strong foundation for understanding suicide in Indonesia as a phenomenon of social excess rather than social absence, opening new avenues for culturally responsive prevention.

The Digital Panopticon and Psychopolitics: Voluntary Surveillance and Steering Desire

To understand the modern psyche, one must first understand the architecture of power that shapes it. Han (2017) critically updated Foucault's disciplinary model for the digital age, arguing we have moved from a disciplinary panopticon to a digital panopticon run by a new logic of power: psychopolitics. Jeremy Bentham's panopticon was a prison of enforced visibility, where inmates internalized the guard's gaze under a regime of prohibition. The digital panopticon, on the other hand, is based on the idea of voluntary—even eager—participation. Unlike the old model where "information [was] wrested from citizens against their will," today, "we voluntarily expose ourselves without any external constraint at all" (Han, 2017). Social media platforms are not merely tools; they are the cells of this new panopticon, and we are their diligent guards and inmates, perpetually

performing and policing our own lives (Rathbone, 2022).

This digital infrastructure enables a new form of governance Han terms psychopolitics. If biopolitical power worked through the negative commands of "you must not," psych political power works through the positive seduction of "you can." It is a "smart power" that reads our data—our likes, searches, and interactions—to gently steer our desires and behaviors on a pre-reflexive level, pleasing and fulfilling us into subjugation (Han, 2017). Social media recognition and attention are its ideal manifestation, transforming life itself into a performance to be maximized and social validation into a gamified obsession (Robinson *et al.*, 2022).

This dynamic is acutely visible in Indonesia, where the rapid proliferation of mobile devices has integrated urban and rural populations into this psych political apparatus (Iwana *et al.*, 2022). Algorithmically curated feeds on platforms like TikTok and Instagram inundate users from urban to rural with a homogeneous stream of aspirational content: curated success stories, luxurious lifestyles, and motivational narratives. The psych political effect is the manufacturing of a universal "ego ideal." An adolescent person in rural areas, consistently exposed to the same digital world as a student in urban areas, internalizes aspirations for a global career and metropolitan lifestyle, creating a psychological landscape where individual ambition becomes systematically detached from local socioeconomic reality.

The consequences of this voluntary self-exposure and psych political steering are profound. The constant pressure to perform this aspirational self-erodes interiority—the private, psychic space essential for reflection and forming an identity independent of external validation (Han, 2017). As

interiority dissolves, the individual becomes a frictionless surface for circulating stimuli, with no room for the protective power of "no" or silence. This, combined with the crisis of gratification from the endless, fleeting pursuit of recognition and attention, leads to neuronal exhaustion and hyper-vigilance (Han, 2015).

Furthermore, this system fosters a deep, paradoxical isolation. While hyper-connected, individuals relate to others primarily as competitors or an audience (Kumari, 2024; Khalechane, 2024; Marhaendra, 2024). The friendship cultivated is often purpose-driven for self-enhancement, eroding the purpose-free bonds that are a key protective factor against despair. As Han (2017) notes, "being free means being among friends," but this regime "leads to utter isolation". Thus, the digital panopticon and its psych political logic do not just watch us; they actively construct the exhausted, isolated, and auto-exploitative entrepreneurial subject, laying the foundational psychological groundwork for the burnout that characterizes late-modern life.

From Disciplinary to Achievement Society: The New Ontology Paradigm of Society

The digital panopticon and Psychopolitics provide the infrastructure for a broader societal shift that Han diagnoses as the transition from a "disciplinary society" to an "achievement society" (Han, 2015). The disciplinary society, as analyzed by Foucault, was governed by external authorities (the church, the state, the factory, etc) that operated through prohibitions and commandments—the negativity of "You should not" or "You should be." Pathologies of this era, such as hysteria and paranoia, stemmed from repression and the conflict between individual desires and social prohibitions.

This shift entails a fundamental change in the nature of human activity, a concern presciently addressed by Hannah Arendt. In *The Human Condition*, Arendt critiques modernity's reduction of all life to animal laborans—whose existence is consumed by the cyclical, never-ending processes of biological life and consumption (Arendt, 2018). She warned of a society where the *vita activa* degenerates into mere functionalism, losing the capacity for true action and contemplation (Arendt, 2018). This manifests as a pervasive hyperactivity, where individuals feel compelled to be constantly active, even in their leisure. In the contemporary context, this is exemplified by the endless, aimless scrolling through social media feeds—an activity that feels like leisure but is, in fact, a form of functional consumption and neurological stimulation that precludes genuine rest or thoughtful mindfulness (Sarah *et al.*, 2024; Silmi *et al.*, 2024; Wu *et al.*, 2023). This Arendtian hyperactivity, when channeled through the neoliberal imperative, becomes the engine of the achievement society (Arendt, 2018).

In contrast to the disciplinary society's external prohibitions, the 21st-century achievement society, supercharged by this culture of hyperactivity and enabled by the digital panopticon's network of voluntary surveillance, is governed by the positive, insidious imperative of "You can," or more accurately, "You be able to" (Han, 2015). The subject is no longer an obedience-subject but an achievement-subject or an entrepreneur of the self. Internalized expectations for continuous self-optimization, performance, and initiative actually subordinate this subject, which believes itself to be completely free and self-determined. Exhaustion, rather than repression, is the pathology of this era; melancholy, ADHD, and burnout syndrome are typical ailments that "express a profound crisis of freedom" (Han, 2017). The

achievement society thus completes Arendt's fears: it transforms the human being into a hyperactive animal laborans that exploits itself, where even one's inner life and leisure become sites of production and performance (Han, 2015).

This shift is critically relevant to Indonesia. The nation's rapid modernization and neoliberal restructuring entail a shift from traditional, communal structures—which, although occasionally constrictive, offered distinct external frameworks—to a society that values personal aspirations, economic independence, and ongoing development (Rakhmani *et al.*, 2025). Higher vulnerability among informal workers and those in economically precarious situations, reflects this pressure (BPS, 2025). These individuals are not merely exploited by a visible master; they are compelled to become their own masters, forced to endlessly hustle and reinvent themselves in a volatile gig economy (Yasih, 2025). The feeling of "compulsive freedom" Han (2015) means that failure is perceived not as a systemic issue but as a personal shortcoming. This aligned with Han (2017) observation that in the achievement society, "people who fail... see themselves as responsible for their lot and feel shame instead of questioning society or the system". The internalization of blame, amplified by the constant social comparison inherent in the digital panopticon, is a powerful driver of the auto-aggression that culminates in suicide (Holmberg *et al.*, 2023; Pietropaoli, 2023; Khalechane, 2024).

Burnout, Auto-Aggression, and the Depressive Turn Against the Self

The ability to examine how the positive of "Can" acts as a type of violence when it collides with material scarcity is a crucial strength of Han's theory. According to the neoliberal promise that is constantly promoted through the digital panopticon everybody can prosper with enough effort

and self-optimization. However, for populations facing severe structural barriers, this positivity becomes a cruel paradox—a "double bind."

Suicide risk in Indonesia is concentrated among low-education, economically vulnerable groups, informal workers and those living in rural, poor, or infrastructure-scarce regions (BPS, 2025) like in Figure 3. The social message of "You can" stands in stark contrast to the reality of food poverty, unstable livelihoods, and a severe shortage of mental health care for young people living in rural areas or impoverished individuals living in urban settlements. Despite lacking the resources for such a business, they are persuaded that they are the architects of their own destiny.

This creates a specific form of psychic distress. The individual, immersed in a digital culture that celebrates success, is pressured to internalize the imperative to achieve, but systemic failures ensure that achievement is impossible (Iwana *et al.*, 2022; Sachdev, 2022). The resulting failure is interpreted through the lens of the achievement society's ideology: as a personal failing. This generates the profound shame and auto-aggression that Byung-Chul Han describes. The violence here is not the negative violence of prohibition, but the positive violence of the unattainable ideal. The subject is not told "you cannot have this," but rather "you can have this," while the system ensures they cannot. This "too-much-of-the-Same" (the relentless, identical pressure to achieve) leads to exhaustion and collapse (Han, 2015). The spatial inequalities in Indonesia, thus, are not just economic but are also landscapes of psych political pressure, where the universal dictate of achievement crashes into localized realities of exclusion.

Within Han's schema, the definitive pathology of the achievement society is not a

conflict with an external law but a collapse originating from within. Depression, in this framework, is not merely sadness; it is "the sickness of a society that suffers from excessive positivity" (Han, 2015). It is the pathological expression of the ego that has internalized the imperative to "be able to do everything" but confronts its own inability, leading to a state where the subject is "fighting with itself" (Han, 2015). This internal war is the soil in which both depression and burnout flourish. While depression is characterized by deep auto-aggressive self-reproach, burnout represents the final stage of energetic depletion—the point where the war within can no longer be sustained, and the self-grinds to a halt. This auto-aggressive dynamic, culminating in the profound depressive and burnt-out state that precedes suicide, is powerfully illustrated in the Indonesian context, particularly when examining the unique plight of rural regions.

The situation in rural areas provides a devastatingly clear case study of how social media, as the primary vehicle for the achievement society's values, directly manufactures depressive conditions and accelerates burnout. Rural youth are increasingly exposed to digital platforms that showcase a curated reality of modern Indonesian life—lifestyles of consumer success, educational attainment, and urban sophistication from and beyond (Iwana *et al.*, 2022). This digital exposure incessantly broadcasts the neoliberal promise: "You can be anyone." It sells a dream of limitless possibility and self-transformation.

This issue is equally potent, though differently manifested, on the more developed islands of Java. Here, the pressure is not from an absolute lack of resources but from the intense, hyper-competitive saturation of the achievement imperative (Han, 2024). The digital panopticon in urban areas does not show an unattainable outside

world, but the seemingly attainable successes of one's immediate peers, fueling a relentless social comparison. The pressure to optimize one's education, career, and social media persona is immense (Robinson *et al.*, 2022). Failure to keep pace—to be a successful "entrepreneur of the self"—is similarly internalized as a personal flaw, generating the same auto-aggressive shame and exhaustion—which grow into suicidal ideation (Rafifah *et al.*, 2025). In this hyper-stimulated environment, burnout is the inevitable cost of maintaining the performance—it is the neuronal exhaustion that results from the inability to disconnect, to pause, or to ever be "enough" in a race without a finish line (Han, 2024).

Across both rural and urban settings, the resulting depression and burnout are characterized by what Han identifies as a key feature: they are often "objectless" (Han, 2015). The individual cannot pinpoint a single external cause for their despair because the cause has become coextensive with their own being (Joseph, 2025). They are not in conflict with a specific other or a clear prohibition; they are at war with their own perceived inadequacy. This objectless despair is profoundly isolating and resistant to simple solutions. It is the "exhausted, depressive achievement society [that] grinds itself down" (Han, 2015). In the burnout society, this grinding down is a slow, agonizing process of self-consumption, where the very resources needed for survival are systematically exhausted by the imperative to perform.

This depressive and burnout crisis is then catastrophically amplified by the severe deficit in mental healthcare and the pervasive cultural taboo against discussing psychological distress outside major urban centers in Java, like Jakarta, Tangerang, etc (BPS, 2025). When the psyche turns against itself in a depressive spiral, and the body and

mind succumb to burnout, the normative pathways for relief—communal sharing, professional counseling, psychiatric intervention—are blocked (Joseph, 2025). The shame of "failure" is compounded by the stigma of "madness" and the misperception of burnout as mere "tiredness," forcing suffering into silence. The individual is left utterly alone with their auto-aggressive thoughts, in a state Han calls "impoverished attachment", where all libidinal energy is withdrawn from the world and redirected against the self (Han, 2015). In this void, where the pain of existence is met with neither communal solace nor professional care, suicide emerges as the only perceived escape from the unbearable tension of a self that has become its own torturer (Joseph, 2025). Suicide, in the logic of the burnout society, is the final, tragic act of auto-exploitation—the ultimate and most devastating form of self-optimization, where the subject eliminates what it perceives as its own failed enterprise.

Therefore, the high suicide rates from rural to urban are unified by a common depressive and burnout logic rooted in the achievement society. Whether the trigger is the aspirational cruelty of social media in a resource-poor setting or the suffocating competition in a resource-rich one, the outcome is a collapse fueled by internalized shame and auto-aggression, progressing from exhaustion to burnout to profound despair. The lack of a robust mental health infrastructure and the persistence of cultural stigma do not merely fail to alleviate this crisis; they actively enable it, ensuring that the psychic violence of the achievement society concludes in the ultimate act of self-negation.

Crafting Solutions Beyond the Performance Paradigm: A Policy Implication Offered

The persistently high suicide rates in both rural and urban Indonesia, while differing in their immediate triggers, share a common root in the pervasive logic of performance and hyperactivity that defines contemporary society. Conventional solutions, such as the one proposed by the BPS (2025) to make mental health services more "inclusive" and accessible, while well-intentioned, operate within the very paradigm that creates the problem. Following Foucault's critique, such measures are merely functional, representing a form of biopower that seeks to optimize the individual for a return to productivity. This is the "psychopolitics" Han (2017) warned of, where the system manages our mental states to ensure we remain efficient components of the economic machine. Making therapy and medication more available does not address the underlying societal sickness—a collective compulsion to perform that erodes the very foundations of human existence: community, ritual, and contemplative stillness. The goal becomes to make the individual function again, not to question the inhumanity of a society that causes the dysfunction in the first place (Han, 2017).

For Han (2024), traditional ceremonies, festivals, and other communal rituals possess a deeper humanity because they embody the living cultural and social values of local communities. These practices—such as the rituals of the penghayat traditions in Sunda, Serawai, Minahasa, Batak, Papua, and elsewhere—serve as powerful symbols of togetherness and solidarity (gotong royong) among community members. Through participation in these rituals, individuals can genuinely reflect on their existence as whole human beings, liberated from the relentless pressure of achievement and performance. These ceremonial spaces offer a rare opportunity for what Han calls the *vita contemplativa*: a mode of being where one's worth is not

measured by productivity but affirmed through collective presence and shared meaning. Unfortunately, these traditional practices are steadily eroding under the forces of economic efficiency, the declining transmission of cultural values across generations, and the distorting influence of increasingly accessible digital entertainment (Aptasari *et al.*, 2024; Damayanti *et al.*, 2025; Simamora *et al.*, 2024).

This critique extends sharply to the dominant form of modern leisure: digital entertainment. Platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and online gaming do not offer genuine respite but represent a seamless extension of the performance society into our so-called "free time." Han (2024) would categorize this as leisure time—a derivative of work that remains tied to its logic. The endless scrolling, the pressure to curate a perfect life, and the gamification of social interaction create a state of constant anxiety—this is not contemplation but a form of hyper-attention that fractures our focus and prevents the deep, whiling required for true mental relaxation (Joseph, 2025). The content itself, in its rapid-fire, sensationalist format, produces enormous noise that destroys silence and robs us of the gift of listening—this digital cacophony does not allow for the boredom that hatches the "egg of experience"; instead, it merely provides a dizzying escape from the self, which ultimately leaves one emptier and more isolated, fueling the very despair it promises to alleviate (Han, 2024).

To institutionalize this shift, a restricted screen time and politics of inactivity must be embedded in our policy and educational frameworks. In the realm of labor, this translates into robust legal protections for disconnection. The right to disconnect from digital work communications after hours must be enshrined in law, creating a legally mandated

digital Sabbath that protects workers from the transcendence of capital—which seeks to exploit life completely (Han, 2024). Furthermore, we must critically re-evaluate the 40-hour work week and explore models like the four-day work week with lower hours (Andini *et al.*, 2024; Mansyur *et al.*, 2021). This is not merely for efficiency, but to create a substantive, collective palace in time—a longer Sabbath dedicated not to consumption, but to the long whiling—which is described as essential for contemplative attention. Such laws would actively resist the neoliberal transformation of all time into productive or consumptive time, defending a sphere of human existence that is valuable precisely because it is unproductive (Han, 2024).

Equally critical is a radical transformation of the educational curriculum. The current system, with its emphasis on standardized testing, rapid information intake, and preparation for the job market, is a factory for the performance subject. It teaches students to be short of breath and short-sighted (Han, 2024). A curriculum informed by *vita contemplativa* would introduce mandatory subjects focused on deep attention: philosophy that encourages doubt and waiting, arts education that values process over product, and unstructured time for pure, aimless play—the essence of beauty (Han, 2018). It would teach children not just how to code, but how to be bored creatively, to listen deeply to the world and to each other, restoring the gift of listening that the digital noise destroys (Han, 2018). This pedagogical shift would foster what Han, following Deleuze, calls the "pure power" of children. This capacity does not act but contemplates, forming the foundation for a life that can resist the exhausting compulsions of achievement and optimization (Han, 2024).

Ultimately, addressing the suicide crisis requires a systemic shift from a society that values only activity to one that embraces

inactivity. Mental health services are necessary, but number one is a cultural and philosophical foundation to dismantle the performance principle itself, which makes us burn out. We must learn from the wisdom inherent in *vita contemplativa* that the ultimate purpose of all human endeavor is inactivity, which is our local wisdom to have it. This means championing forms of education that teach children the value of deep attention and boredom over rapid task-switching; economic policies that protect and ensure a true day of rest; and a collective revaluation that sees a person staring into the distance or a farmer sitting peacefully as engaged in a profoundly human and necessary act, not as a symbol of unproductivity (Han, 2024). Only by creating a society that offers its citizens the possibility of a radiant inactivity, free from the terror of performance, can we hope to heal the spiritual void that manifests in the tragic and final act of suicide

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Through the lens of Byung-Chul Han's critical theory, it reveals that the rising suicide rate in Indonesia is not a mere collection of individual tragedies but the logical endpoint of a systemic psychopolitical condition. The digital panopticon, with its algorithms and psychopolitical steering, has dismantled traditional disciplinary structures, replacing them with an achievement society that commands relentless self-optimization under the seductive but violent imperative of "You can." This system manufactures a universal ego ideal that, when it crashes into the unyielding realities of structural inequality in both rural and urban areas, creates a devastating double bind. The resulting internalization of systemic failure as personal shame ignites an auto-aggressive war within the self, manifesting as the neuronal

exhaustion of burnout and the objectless despair of depression.

Ultimately, when these internal conflicts unfold in the context of eroded community ties and a critical lack of mental health services, suicide emerges as a tragic and final act of self-exploitation. This study recommends not only improvements to more inclusive mental health services, but also the need for changes to the culture and philosophical foundations of this modern era through *vita contemplativa*. It is hoped that future researchers can examine the application of *vita contemplativa* in education, management, and business. Also, future researchers are hoped to conduct pilot studies such as reviving traditional rituals as protective communal spaces in Papua, establishing Sabbath initiatives to reduce performance anxiety, or analyzing the correlation between the erosion of local wisdom (*gotong royong*) and mental health outcomes.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author extends sincere gratitude to Dr. Supartingsih all classmates in the Master of Philosophy program in Gadjah Mada University, for inspiration, knowledge, and insightful suggestions that profoundly guided this study.

FUNDING SOURCE

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Gregory Yehezkiel Marhaendra was involved in the conceptualization, data collection, writing, proofreading, and review.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares there is no conflict of interest with any party.

DECLARATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

The author acknowledges the use of Deepseek for language refinement in preparing this manuscript. All AI-generated content was rigorously reviewed, edited, and validated to ensure accuracy and originality. Full responsibility for the manuscript's final content rests with the author.

REFERENCES

- Almaidah, A. R., & Harianto, S. (2023). Analisis Kasus Novia Widaysari Dalam Perspektif Teori Bunuh Diri Emile Durkheim. *Jurnal Publique*, 4(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.15642/publique.2023.4.1.1-12>
- Andini, F. A. D., & Siregar, A. Y. M. (2024). Work hours and the risk of hypertension: the case of Indonesia. *BMC Public Health*, 24(2480), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-024-20003-z>
- Aptasari, F. W., Falah, M. H., & Akbar, M. M. (2024). Transformasi ritual adat: Dari pelestarian budaya ke komoditas ekonomi. *Journal of Economics Research and Policy Studies*, 4(3), 378–395. <https://doi.org/10.53088/jerps.v4i3.1204>
- Arendt, H. (2018). *The Human Condition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Bakker, A., Alisjahbana, S. T., Abdullah, M. A., Noerhadi, T. H., Sudarminta, J., Hadi, P. H., Syamsuddin, M. M., & Wattimena, R. A. (2011). *Metodologi*

- Penelitian Filsafat*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius.
- BPS. (2025). *Potret Masalah Perilaku dan Emosional di Indonesia: Siapa yang Paling Rentan? In Cerita Data Statistik Untuk Indonesia*.
<https://www.bps.go.id/id/publication/2025/06/30/315f265c272f6a38f920d65c/cerita-data-statistik-untuk-indonesia-potret-masalah-perilaku-dan-emosional-di-indonesia-siapa-yang-paling-rentan-.html>
- Carnwell, R., & Daly, W. (2001). Strategies for the construction of a critical review of the literature. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 1(2), 57–63.
<https://doi.org/10.1054/nepr.2001.0008>
- Damayanti, D., Ramli, R. B., Oktariani, M., Hanipah, S., Mudatsir, M., Parman, P., & Ismail, I. (2025). Edukasi dan Pelestarian Budaya Papua Selatan melalui Merauke Imbuti Festival. *Abdimas Langkanae*, 5(1), 86–93.
<https://doi.org/10.53769/jpm.v5i1.397>
- Fernandez, K. V. (2019). Critically reviewing literature: A tutorial for new researchers. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, 27(3), 187–196.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ausmj.2019.05.001>
- Han, B.-C. (2015). *The Burnout Society*. California: Stanford University Press.
- Han, B.-C. (2017). *Psychopolitics: Neoliberalism and New Technologies of Power*. London: Verso.
- Han, B.-C. (2018). *Saving Beauty*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Han, B.-C. (2024). *Vita Contemplativa*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Holmberg, Å., Karlsson, B., & Moses Deyegbe, K. (2023). ‘I need to belong and be part of something bigger’ – Spiritual and existential experiences and reflections among young people not in employment, education or training. *Human Systems*, 4(2), 96–114.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/26344041231221555>
- IASC. (2022). *IASC Guidance, Addressing Suicide in Humanitarian Settings*.
<https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-reference-group-mental-health-and-psychosocial-support-emergency-settings/iasc-guidance-addressing-suicide-humanitarian-settings>
- Iwana, M. D. C., Hidayat, A. R. T., Dinanti, D., & Onitsuka, K. (2022). The Effects of Internet on Rural-to-Urban Migrating Intentions of Young Villagers: Evidence from Rural Indonesia. *AGRARI: Journal of Agribusiness and Rural Development Research*, 8(2), 139–159.
<https://doi.org/10.18196/agraris.v8i2.14045>
- Jesson, J. K., Matheson, L., & Lacey, F. M. (2011). *Doing Your Literature Review: Traditional and Systematic*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Joseph, J. (2025). *High Functioning Overcome Your Hidden Depression and Reclaim Your Joy*. New York: Little, Brown Spark.
- Khalechane, M. M. L. (2024). *Exploring Perceptions of a Link, Between Social Media Usage and Suicide Risk Among Young People: The Case of Roma Community, Maseru, Lesotho* [National University of Lesotho].
<https://africacommons.net/artifacts/51626942/exploring-perceptions-of-a-link-between-social-media-usage-and-suicide-risk-among-young-people-in-lesotho/52525586/>

- Kumari, R. (2024). The Influence of Social Media on Social Interactions and Mental Health. *International Journal of Advances in Engineering, Science, Commerce, Management and Law*, 1(1), 46–54. <https://www.ijaescml.com/gallery/78-files-data-c74d97b01eae257e44aa9d5bade97baf-16.pdf>
- Mansyur, M., Sagitasari, R., Wangge, G., Sulistomo, A. B., & Kekalih, A. (2021). Long working hours, poor sleep quality, and work-family conflict: determinant factors of fatigue among Indonesian tugboat crewmembers. *BMC Public Health*, 21(1832), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-021-11883-6>
- Marhaendra, G. Y. (2024). Bridging Ethics and Education: Crafting Solutions to Address the Threads of Bullying in Indonesia. *Jurnal Filsafat*, 34(2), 254. <https://doi.org/10.22146/jf.92648>
- Mueller, A. S., Abrutyn, S., Pescosolido, B., Diefendorf, S., & Selby, E. A. (2021). The Social Roots of Suicide: Theorizing How the External Social World Matters to Suicide and Suicide Prevention. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12(621569), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.621569>
- Pietropaoli, M. (2023). New Aspects of Well-being in the Crisis Era: Emotions, Generations, Anxieties, and Work. *PuntoOrg International Journal*, 10(2), 194–210. <https://www.puntoorginternationaljournal.org/index.php/PIJ/article/view/174/134>
- Rafifah, Z. K., & Sianturi, R. (2025). The Relationship Between Body Shaming with Self-Esteem and Suicide Risk Among Late Adolescents at Jakarta, Indonesia: A Cross-Sectional Study. *Journal of Community Mental Health And Public Policy*, 8(1), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.51602/cmhp.v8i1.231>
- Rakhmani, I., & Sakhiyya, Z. (2025). The Cultural Political Economy of Knowledge in Neo-Liberal Indonesia. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 55(3), 388–404. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472336.2023.2298449>
- Rathbone, M. (2022). Panopticism, impartial spectator and digital technology. *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology*, 22(1), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20797222.2022.2064720>
- Robinson, A., Moscardini, E., Tucker, R., & Calamia, M. (2022). Perfectionistic Self-Presentation, Socially Prescribed Perfectionism, Self-Oriented Perfectionism, Interpersonal Hopelessness, and Suicidal Ideation in U.S. Adults: Reexamining the Social Disconnection Model. *Archives of Suicide Research*, 26(3), 1447–1461. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13811118.2021.1922108>
- Rona, H. (2025). Bunuh Diri dari Perspektif Sosial Emile Durkheim: Peran Gmit Dalam Mengatasi Fenomena Bunuh Diri di NTT. *Imatio Christo: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen*, 1(3), 107–128. <https://doi.org/10.63536/imitatiochristo.v1i3.19>
- Sachdev, A. (2022). Employee Development : New Paradigms. *NHRD Network Journal*, 15(3), 326–336. <https://doi.org/10.1177/26314541221090687>

-
- Sarah, S., Sari, K., Iskandar, & Amna, Z. (2024). The Relationship Between Mindfulness and Academic Resilience in Students of Syiah Kuala University, Indonesia: Cross-Sectional Study. *Journal of Community Mental Health And Public Policy*, 6(2), 134–145. <https://doi.org/10.51602/cmhp.v6i2.151>
- Silmi, A. Z., & Lailiyah, S. (2024). Literature Review: The Relationship Between Smartphone Use and Incidents of Anxiety (Nomophobia) Among Adolescents in Indonesia. *Journal of Community Mental Health And Public Policy*, 7(1), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.51602/cmhp.v7i1.171>
- Simamora, S., Lingga, Y., Pardede, N., Binneka, I., & Lubis, F. (2024). Mempertahankan Warisan Budaya: Ritual Adat Pernikahan Suku Mandailing di Tengah Perubahan. *JERUMI: Journal of Education Religion Humanities and Multidisciplinary*, 2(2), 1092–1095. <https://doi.org/10.57235/jerumi.v2i2.4043>
- WHO. (2021). *LIVE LIFE: An implementation guide for suicide prevention in countries*. <https://iris.who.int/server/api/core/bitstreams/8f4bb596-e6e4-4328-a5ed-00e01ec0068d/content>
- Wu, R., Zhong, S.-Y., Wang, G.-H., Wu, M.-Y., Xu, J.-F., Zhu, H., Liu, L.-L., Su, W.-J., Cao, Z.-Y., & Jiang, C.-L. (2023). The Effect of Brief Mindfulness Meditation on Suicidal Ideation, Stress and Sleep Quality. *Archives of Suicide Research*, 27(2), 215–230. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13811118.2021.1982800>
- Yasih, D. W. P. (2025). *Precarious Workers in the Gig Economy: Neoliberalism and its Discontents in Indonesia*. Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.
-