

DIGITAL MEDIA PRACTICES IN MUSLIM FAMILIES IN YOGYAKARTA : A *MASLAHAH* AND *SADD AL-DHARĀ'I* ANALYSIS OF FAMILY INTERACTION

Susiana¹, Hasmia Wahyunisa², Neneng Desi Susanti³, Fathur Baldan Haramain²

¹ Institut Agama Islam Tafaqquh Fiddin Dumai, Indonesia

² Institut Agama Islam DDI Sidenreng Rappang, Indonesia

³ Institut Agama Islam Tafaqquh Fiddin Dumai, Indonesia

⁴ Universitas Al-Azhar Cairo, Egypt

Email : susianamujanu@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines digital media practices among Muslim families in Yogyakarta through the perspectives of *maṣlaḥah* and *Sadd al-dharā'i'* in maintaining the quality of family interaction in the digital era. Employing a qualitative case study approach, the research involved five Muslim families who actively utilize digital media in their daily lives. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, and analyzed thematically to explore how families benefit from digital media while managing its potential risks. The findings reveal that digital media is not understood dichotomously as either entirely beneficial or harmful, but rather as a practice continuously negotiated within family life. *Maṣlaḥah* is reflected in the use of digital media to sustain communication, support educational activities, and strengthen religious engagement. Meanwhile, *Sadd al-dharā'i'* is manifested through situational forms of regulation, including screen-time management, parental guidance, content supervision, and the development of digital communication ethics within the family. The study further finds that the relationship between *maṣlaḥah* and *Sadd al-dharā'i'* does not constitute a fixed balance; instead, it is better understood as a dynamic spectrum in which each family occupies a different position according to its experiences, priorities, and social context. Therefore, a *sakinah* family in the digital era is not defined as an idealized harmonious condition, but rather as the family's capacity to manage relationships adaptively amidst the opportunities and risks of digital media use.

Keywords : Digital Media, *Sakinah* Family, *Maslahah*, *Sadd Al-Dharā'i'*, *Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'ah*, Islamic Digital Ethics

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis praktik penggunaan media digital pada keluarga Muslim di Yogyakarta melalui perspektif maṣlaḥah dan Sadd al-dharā'i' dalam menjaga kualitas interaksi keluarga di era digital. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus terhadap lima keluarga Muslim yang aktif memanfaatkan media digital dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis secara tematik untuk memahami bagaimana keluarga memanfaatkan media digital sekaligus mengelola risiko yang menyertainya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan media digital tidak dipahami secara dikotomis sebagai sesuatu yang sepenuhnya bermanfaat

ataupun merugikan, melainkan sebagai praktik yang terus dinegosiasikan dalam kehidupan keluarga. Masalah tampak dalam pemanfaatan media digital untuk menjaga keberlanjutan komunikasi, mendukung aktivitas pendidikan, dan memperkuat keterlibatan keagamaan. Sementara itu, *Sadd al-dharā'i'* diwujudkan melalui berbagai bentuk pengaturan yang bersifat situasional, seperti pembatasan waktu penggunaan, pendampingan anak, pengawasan konten, dan pembentukan etika komunikasi digital dalam keluarga. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa hubungan antara masalah dan *Sadd al-dharā'i'* tidak membentuk keseimbangan yang bersifat tetap, tetapi lebih tepat dipahami sebagai spektrum dinamis yang berbeda pada setiap keluarga sesuai dengan pengalaman, prioritas, dan konteks kehidupannya. Oleh karena itu, keluarga sakinah di era digital tidak dimaknai sebagai kondisi harmonis yang ideal, melainkan sebagai kemampuan keluarga untuk mengelola relasi secara adaptif di tengah peluang dan risiko penggunaan media digital.

Kata Kunci : *Media Digital, Keluarga Sakinah, Masalah, Sadd Adz-dzari'ah, Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, Etika Digital Islam*

A. INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has not only expanded access to communication technologies but has also reconfigured how authority, emotional closeness, and religious values are negotiated within family life.¹ In Muslim families, where the household functions as a primary site for the transmission of moral and religious norms, this shift introduces a specific analytical problem: digital media does not merely facilitate communication, but reshapes how those norms are practiced, interpreted, and sustained in everyday interactions. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), indicating that more than 78% of households in Indonesia have internet access, should not be read merely as a marker of connectivity, but as evidence that digital media has become embedded in domestic space. This condition blurs the boundary between face-to-face and digitally mediated interaction, raising questions about how family

¹ Amelia Yetri Mukhlis, Doki Wardiman, "Indonesian Muslim Societies in the Digital Age : Opportunities, Challenges, and Future Prospects," *Digital Muslim Review* 2, no. 2 (2024): 194–216, <https://doi.org/10.32678/dmr.v2i2.46>; Moh Nor Ichwan et al., "Digitalization and the Shifting Religious Literature of Indonesian Muslims in the Era of Society 5 . 0," *Islamic Communication Journal* 9, no. 2 (2024): 245–65, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21580/icj.2024.9.2.22515> Digitalization.

relationships are maintained and regulated.² This condition leads to a more specific analytical question: whether the intensification of digital engagement supports or instead complicates the maintenance of meaningful, value-based family relationships.³

In everyday practice, platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and TikTok are widely integrated into family routines for communication, coordination, and expression. However, this trend signals more than a shift in communication tools; it reveals an unresolved scholarly issue concerning how digitally mediated interaction reshapes the quality of family relationships, the transmission of religious values, and the negotiation of ethical boundaries within the household.⁴ Existing studies tend to describe digital media either as a tool of connection or as a source of risk, yet they rarely explain how families actively negotiate these competing possibilities in practice.⁵ As a result, the processes through which digital media is interpreted, managed, and ethically framed within the household remain insufficiently understood.

Rather than simply offering new opportunities for communication, the growing integration of digital media introduces a more specific tension: it reshapes how attention, emotional presence, and religious engagement are distributed within the family. A global report by We Are Social (2026), indicating that social media use in Indonesia exceeds three hours per day,⁶ is

² Badan Pusat Statistik, "Persentase Rumah Tangga Yang Pernah Mengakses Internet Dalam 3 Bulan Terakhir Menurut Provinsi Dan Klasifikasi Daerah, 2024," Badan Pusat Statistik, 2024, <https://www.bps.go.id/id/statistics-table/2/Mzk4IzI=/persentase-rumah-tangga-yang-pernah-mengakses-internet-dalam-3-bulan-terakhir-menurut-provinsi-dan-klasifikasi-daerah.html>.

³ Amber Van Der Wal, Patti M Valkenburg, and Loes Keijsers, "Parent – Adolescent Communication in a Digital World : A 100- - Day Diary Study," *Child Development* 96 (2025): 736–51, <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.14203>.

⁴ M Reza Pratama Utami Niki Kusaini, Nurul Husna, Yodia Setiawati, Zidan Alhamdika, "Pengaruh Media Sosial Terhadap Hubungan Dan Interaksi Antar Keluarga," *INNOVATIVE : Journal Of Social Science Research* Volume 4, no. 3 (2024): 9265–73.

⁵ Alessandro Lovari and Shannon A Bowen, "Social Media in Disaster Communication : A Case Study of Strategies, Barriers, and Ethical Implications," *Journal of Public Affairs* 20, no. 1 (2020): 2, <https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.1967>.

⁶ We Are Social, "Digital 2026: Tren Digital Dan Media Sosial Teratas Di Indonesia," We Are Social, 2026, <https://wearesocial-com.translate.goog/id/blog/2025/11/digital-2026-top-digital-and-social-media-trends-in-indonesia>

therefore significant not because it proves a decline in face-to-face interaction, but because it reflects the growing centrality of digitally mediated engagement in everyday life. The analytical problem, then, is not whether digital media is beneficial or harmful in general terms, but how its intensification intersects with the normative expectations of Muslim family life, particularly in relation to maintaining meaningful interaction, transmitting religious values, and regulating everyday conduct.

Within this context, selecting Yogyakarta is not merely a matter of location, but relates to a specific analytical tension observable in this setting.⁷ As an urban area with relatively high levels of education and widespread digital access, Yogyakarta represents a social environment in which digital media is deeply embedded in everyday family life. At the same time, it is characterized by a strong religious culture, where Islamic values continue to shape expectations of family interaction and moral conduct. The coexistence of intensive digital engagement and sustained religious orientation does not automatically produce alignment; instead, it generates ongoing negotiations over how digital practices are adapted to, justified by, or constrained through value-based norms. In this sense, Yogyakarta is approached not simply as a backdrop, but as a site where these negotiations become empirically traceable.

Despite this, existing scholarship has not sufficiently examined how such negotiations are carried out at the level of everyday family life. Much of the literature remains focused either on general patterns of digital use or on normative prescriptions, without closely analyzing how families interpret, balance, and respond to the competing demands of connectivity and value maintenance. This gap is particularly significant in the context of Muslim

⁷ CNN Indonesia, "Kominfo Jelaskan Kenapa Yogyakarta Paling Melek Digital Se-Indonesia," CNN Indonesia, 2023, <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/teknologi/20230201144041-192-907616/kominfo-jelaskan-kenapa-yogyakarta-paling-melek-digital-se-indonesia>; William Ciputra, "Awal Mula Yogyakarta Dijuluki Kota Pelajar," Kompas.com, 2022, <https://yogyakarta.kompas.com/read/2022/01/11/184512078/awal-mula-yogyakarta-dijuluki-kota-pelajar?page=all>.

families, where everyday practices are often shaped by religiously grounded ethical considerations.

To address this gap, the study employs the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* not merely as a normative reference but as an analytical lens,⁸ but as an analytical lens for examining how families evaluate and regulate digital practices.⁹ Rather than relying on abstract doctrinal formulations, the study focuses on two operational principles : *maṣlaḥah* (the realization of benefit) and *Sadd al-dharāʿiʿ* (the prevention of potential harm). These principles are approached as they appear in practice—*maṣlaḥah* in the use of digital media to sustain communication, support learning, and facilitate religious engagement, and *Sadd al-dharāʿiʿ* in the ways families impose limits, supervise content, and anticipate risks. In this sense, they function not as fixed categories, but as interpretive tools for tracing how benefit and risk are negotiated in everyday family life.

The analytical advantage of this framework lies in its ability to connect normative evaluation with lived practice. While studies on digital parenting and family communication often describe behavioral patterns, they do not necessarily capture how such practices are justified and prioritized within a coherent moral framework. By contrast, the *maqāṣid* perspective allows this study to examine not only what families do, but how they interpret and regulate their actions in relation to broader ethical objectives.

Previous studies on digital parenting, family communication, and digital literacy offer diverse perspectives, ranging from behavioral regulation to relational approaches and critical media skills.¹⁰ However, most of these

⁸ Habib Ahmed, "Islamic Normative Legal Theory : Framework and Applications," *Journal Of Law and Religion* 40, no. 1 (2025): 28–58, <https://doi.org/10.1017/jlr.2025.10056>.

⁹ Yusuf Wibisono, "The Concept of *Maqāṣid Al-Sharīʿah* and *Ma ṣ La ḥ Ah* in the Classical and Contemporary *Tafsīr*," *International Journal of Islamic Economics and Business Sustainability (IJIEBS)* 1, no. 2 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.7454/ijiebs.v1i2.1021>.

¹⁰ Anisa Rahmawati, "Digital Literacy in The Family (Case Study of Restricting Youtube Use in Children)," in *Proceeding Jogjakarta Communication Conference*, vol. 3, 2021, 92–98; Jiaxue Lou et al., "The Association between Family Socio- Demographic Factors , Parental Mediation and Adolescents ' Digital Literacy : A Cross- Sectional Study," *BMC Public Health*, 2024, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-024-20284-4>; Puspa Miladin

studies share a common limitation: they focus primarily on observable practices without sufficiently examining the normative reasoning underlying them. Consequently, digital media use is often treated as a matter of strategy rather than as a process of value-based negotiation.

This study addresses that limitation by bridging Islamic normative frameworks with empirical family practices. Without such a bridge, analyses of digital parenting risk remaining descriptively rich but normatively thin, overlooking the moral parameters through which Muslim families interpret benefit and harm. At the same time, Islamic legal discussions on *maṣlaḥah* and *Sadd al-dharā'ī'* often remain at a doctrinal level, with limited engagement with everyday social practice. This study therefore seeks to connect these two domains by providing an empirically grounded account of how Islamic ethical reasoning is operationalized in the context of digital family life.

Accordingly, this study is guided by two main research questions : (1) how do Muslim families in Yogyakarta understand and apply the principles of *maṣlaḥah* and *Sadd al-dharā'ī'* in their use of digital media; and (2) how do these practices relate to their efforts to maintain harmonious family interactions (*sakinah*) in a digitally mediated environment ?

Methodologically, this study employs a qualitative approach with a multiple case study design to explore in depth the practices of digital media use within Muslim families.¹¹ This approach is chosen because it enables a contextual analysis of the experiences, meanings, and strategies developed by each family in managing digital media use. In addition to field data collection, the study is supported by a review of relevant literature to strengthen the

Nuraida Safitri A. Basid Aprilia Mega Rosdiana, Dessy Putri Wahyuningtyas, Devi Pramitha, "Navigating Children's Digital World Safely : The Role of Positive Parenting through Digital Literacy in Densely Population Villages," *Gender Equality : International Journal of Child and Gender Studies* 11, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.22373/equality.v11i1.26409>; Leonarda Bani, "A Comparison of Parenting Strategies in a Digital Environment : A Systematic Literature Review," *Multimodal Technologies and Interaction* 8, no. 32 (2025), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3390/mti8040032>.

¹¹ Al Nasarudin et., *Studi Kasus Dan Multi Situs Dalam Pendekatan Kualitatif* (Padang: CV Gita Lentera, 2023).

conceptual framework, particularly concerning *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, *maṣlaḥah*, and *Sadd al-dharā'ī'*.

The research was conducted in Yogyakarta, which was selected as the research locus based on several considerations. First, national data indicate that urban areas in Indonesia, including Yogyakarta, tend to have relatively high levels of internet penetration and digital media use compared to other regions.¹² Second, Yogyakarta is widely recognized for its strong educational base and an active Muslim community engaged in religious practices.¹³ Nevertheless, this study does not position Yogyakarta as representative of the entire Indonesian context; rather, it is treated as a relevant contextual setting for examining the interaction between digital practices and religious values within Muslim families.

The research subjects consisted of five Muslim families with diverse socio-economic backgrounds, including civil servants, teachers, lecturers, entrepreneurs, and homemakers. Informants were selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria: (1) Muslim families with at least two children, (2) relatively intensive use of digital media (approximately two hours or more per day), and (3) active parental involvement in children's digital activities. These criteria deliberately focus the study on families with high levels of digital media engagement; therefore, the findings should be understood as reflecting this specific group rather than representing Muslim families more broadly.

Data were collected over a three-month period from May to June 2025 using multiple techniques. First, in-depth interviews were conducted with parents and, to a limited extent, with children, in order to understand patterns of digital media use, perceptions of benefits and risks, and family management

¹² Yelinka Maresa Sianturi, "DIY Raih Penetrasi Internet Tertinggi Se-Indonesia," DATASATU.COM, 2025, <https://datasatu.com/teknologi-dan-informasi/2819492/10-provinsi-dengan-penetrasi-internet-tertinggi>.

¹³ Angga Suryana, "Studi Kasus Warga Multikultural Yogyakarta Di Era Digital Dan Peran Pendidikan Agama Islam," *JDP (JURNAL DINAMIKA PENDIDIKAN)* 11, no. 2017 (2025): 126–34.

strategies. Second, observations were carried out both through direct (face-to-face) interaction and limited observation of digital interactions, such as family communication patterns via messaging applications. Third, documentation was collected in the form of records of digital activities, screenshots of family communication (with participants' consent), and other supporting materials. All data collection procedures adhered to research ethics, including informed consent, anonymization of identities, and the protection of family and child data.

Data analysis was conducted in several stages, including data reduction, thematic categorization, and reflective conclusion drawing. During the categorization stage, data were coded thematically by identifying practices that reflect *maṣlahah* (strengthening communication, supporting education, and facilitating religious activities) as well as potential *mafsadah* (such as excessive use, exposure to inappropriate content, and reduced face-to-face interaction). These categories were then mapped onto the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* framework, particularly the dimensions of *ḥifẓ al-dīn*, *ḥifẓ al-'aql*, and *ḥifẓ al-nasl*, in order to examine how the principles of *maṣlahah* and *Sadd al-dharā'ī'* are articulated in family practices. In this way, the theoretical framework functions not only as a normative foundation but also as an analytical tool for interpreting the empirical data.

B. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

1. Digital Media as a Means of Maslahah in Strengthening Family Communication and Education

Based on interviews and observations of five Muslim families in Yogyakarta, all participating families (five out of five) use digital media as an integral part of their daily communication. The duration of use varies, generally ranging from three to five hours per day; however, this usage does not necessarily occur continuously and is often distributed across different daily activities. WhatsApp is the most commonly used application (used by all families), while Instagram is used by three out of five families, and Telegram

by two out of five families. In addition, several families also utilize platforms such as YouTube and online learning services to support children's educational activities.

Most families (four out of five) reported that digital media are used not only for practical communication but also for religious and educational purposes, such as sharing lecture links, prayer reminders, and children's learning materials. One informant, Mrs. R (43 years old, madrasah teacher), explained:

“When the children are busy with school and I am teaching, we still send each other prayer messages and study links. We feel close even though we rarely gather at home”

These findings suggest that *maṣlahah* emerges not only at the level of media use as a communication tool but also in the way digital media are integrated into family relational practices. In some cases, religious messages shared within family groups are followed by brief responses, light discussions, or expressions of commitment to worship. This pattern indicates attempts to foster emotional closeness and a religious atmosphere through digital interaction, although the intensity and depth of responses vary across family members.

In the context of education, three out of five families use digital media as a means of informal learning for their children. Parents not only provide access but also engage in content selection and, to a certain extent, supervision. As stated by Mr. M (41 years old, entrepreneur):

“My child likes watching Islamic cartoons on YouTube. I accompany him so he knows what is good. Sometimes we learn together”

These practices can be cautiously interpreted as related to *ḥifẓ al-‘aql*, not simply because children are exposed to content deemed “good,” but to the extent that parents are actively involved in selecting, framing, and supervising media use. In some cases, parents reported differentiating between educational and entertainment content based on criteria such as the presence of moral or religious messages, appropriateness of language, and relevance to

school learning. Some parents also described accompanying their children during viewing, asking follow-up questions, or connecting media content to everyday lessons, indicating an effort to guide understanding rather than passive consumption.

However, these practices are not uniform and are not consistently implemented. In some situations, children continue to access digital media independently, and parental involvement becomes intermittent. Furthermore, data have not yet demonstrated a clear or sustained impact on learning discipline, critical thinking, or the quality of family conversations. Therefore, the association with *ḥifẓ al-‘aql* should be understood as tentative and practice-based, reflecting an emerging orientation toward protecting cognitive development rather than a fully established outcome. Therefore, the resulting *maṣlaḥah* remains situational and depends on the intensity and consistency of parental involvement.

Meanwhile, similar to the case of *ḥifẓ al-‘aql*, the dimension of *ḥifẓ al-nasl* may be cautiously interpreted through parental efforts to define, negotiate, and regulate what is considered inappropriate digital content. In this study, “inappropriate” does not refer to a fixed category, but is constructed through parental judgments that commonly include content perceived as excessive entertainment, celebrity gossip, language considered impolite, or materials seen as potentially distracting from children’s learning and moral development. These boundaries are not uniformly defined, but are discussed and, in some cases, negotiated within the family through everyday interactions, such as reminding, questioning, or selectively allowing access under supervision.

There are also observable differences in how such boundaries are articulated across families. Parents with educational backgrounds in teaching or academia tend to frame restrictions in terms of learning value and moral messaging, while others emphasize practical concerns such as time discipline and behavioral impact. However, these distinctions are indicative rather than

systematic, given the limited number of cases. Children's responses to these restrictions also vary, ranging from compliance—particularly when rules are explained—to occasional resistance, especially in relation to entertainment content or extended screen time.

In this regard, the operation of *sadd al-dharā'ī'* is better understood as a form of situated preventive reasoning rather than a formalized control system. Rather than imposing rigid or uniform rules, families appear to engage in ongoing, context-dependent efforts to anticipate and limit potential risks. Accordingly, the linkage to *ḥifẓ al-nasl* should be read not as a definitive outcome, but as an interpretive lens for understanding how concerns about children's moral and social development are expressed and negotiated in everyday digital practices.

Observational findings further show that four out of five families maintain routine practices that utilize digital media to sustain emotional closeness, such as sending prayer messages before bedtime or reminding one another of religious activities. In addition, three families regularly use video calls to communicate with family members living outside the city, including children studying in Islamic boarding schools. These practices suggest that digital media can function as a means of maintaining family relationships across distance, although they do not fully replace face-to-face interaction.

At the same time, the field data do not directly demonstrate that the duration of digital media use (three to five hours per day) automatically substitutes for direct interaction within the family. In several cases, media use occurs alongside other activities, such as work or study. Therefore, potential *mafsadah*, such as reduced face-to-face interaction or diminished emotional closeness, are better understood as possible risks to be anticipated rather than as outcomes that consistently occur across all families.

Within the framework of *Sadd al-dharā'ī'*, some families acknowledged challenges in managing children's media use, particularly regarding excessive use and exposure to inappropriate content. However, responses to these

challenges vary, ranging from time restrictions and direct supervision to more persuasive approaches through communication. This indicates that preventive mechanisms are not uniform but are negotiated within the specific context of each family.

Overall, these findings indicate that digital media use among Muslim families in Yogyakarta cannot be understood dichotomously as either entirely beneficial or harmful. Rather, it reflects a dynamic process of negotiation between the potential for *maṣlaḥah* and the risks of *mafsadah*. Importantly, this process of negotiation is not context-neutral, but is shaped by the specific socio-cultural environment of Yogyakarta.

As a city characterized by relatively high levels of educational attainment and digital literacy, families in Yogyakarta tend to demonstrate a more reflexive engagement with digital media. Parents are not only users of technology but also active interpreters of its value, often drawing on both educational considerations and religious sensibilities when guiding their children's media use. At the same time, Yogyakarta's strong religious social fabric reinforces expectations that family practices—including digital interaction—should remain aligned with Islamic ethical norms.

This combination produces a distinctive pattern: digital media is neither fully embraced as a neutral tool nor rejected as a moral threat, but continuously negotiated in relation to educational aspirations and religious commitments. For instance, the emphasis on selecting “appropriate” content, maintaining communication through religious messages, and setting flexible yet value-oriented boundaries reflects an attempt to align everyday digital practices with both intellectual development and moral discipline.

In this context, the principles of *maṣlaḥah* and *sadd al-dharā'ī'* function not merely as abstract normative categories, but as interpretive frameworks through which families make sense of and regulate their engagement with technology. Thus, what appears as ordinary digital parenting practices gains analytical significance when situated within the particular educational and

religious ecology of Yogyakarta, where digital engagement is consistently evaluated against both cognitive and moral expectations.

Thus, family harmony (*sakinah*) in the digital context cannot be reduced to the mere presence or absence of technology, but is better understood as an adaptive capacity to interpret, regulate, and integrate digital media within value-oriented family relationships. Rather than functioning as passive recipients of technological change, the families in this study emerge as active moral agents who continuously negotiate Islamic values in response to evolving digital practices.

Importantly, *sakinah* in this context is not reflected in an idealized state of constant harmony, but in observable practices such as sustained communication, negotiated boundaries of media use, and shared efforts to align digital engagement with religious and educational priorities. At the same time, the variation across cases indicates that this negotiation does not follow a single pattern, but unfolds differently depending on each family's internal dynamics, resources, and interpretive frameworks.

2. Digital Challenges and the Urgency of Implementing *Sadd Al-Dharā'i* Principles in Controlling Mafsadah Potential

Although the use of digital media among Muslim families in Yogyakarta demonstrates various forms of benefit, the field data also reveal emerging risks recognized by parents, particularly in relation to time management and content exposure. Four out of five families reported difficulties in controlling their children's screen time, especially at night. In several cases, children at the elementary and junior secondary levels spent more than four hours per day watching videos or playing online games, although this duration was often fragmented across different moments of the day.

However, parental responses to this challenge are not uniform. Some families tend to adopt a rule-based approach, emphasizing clear boundaries such as fixed screen-time limits and restrictions on device use before bedtime. These families—particularly those with professional backgrounds in

education—frame control as part of disciplined daily routines. In contrast, other families rely more on a persuasive and dialogical approach, where rules are negotiated through conversation and adjusted according to the child's needs and behavior. In these cases, control is less formalized and more dependent on situational judgment.

This variation is reflected in the testimony of one informant, Mrs. S (39 years old, homemaker):

“My child often loses track of time when he’s using his phone. Sometimes he’s still watching YouTube until 10 p.m. Now we’ve created a schedule so it doesn’t get out of control”

While this example illustrates the introduction of structured regulation, similar concerns in other families are addressed through reminders and informal agreements rather than fixed schedules. This indicates that the issue is not merely the duration of use, but how boundaries are constructed, communicated, and enforced within each household.

From the perspective of *sadd al-dharā’i*, these practices can be understood as preventive efforts grounded in lived experience. Yet, the form these efforts take varies significantly. Some families emphasize direct supervision, such as requiring children to use devices only in shared spaces, while others prioritize relational monitoring, asking children about the content they consume and encouraging self-awareness. In a smaller number of cases, a more technical orientation is visible, with parents utilizing parental control features or restricting access at the device level.

Importantly, these different strategies also reflect distinct ways of framing risk. In some families, concerns are articulated in explicitly religious terms, particularly regarding moral propriety and the avoidance of inappropriate content. In others, the emphasis is more pragmatic, focusing on maintaining study discipline and preventing distraction. This suggests that *sadd al-dharā’i* is not enacted through a single uniform logic, but is interpreted through multiple lenses—religious, educational, and practical—depending on the family context.

Beyond time management, three out of five families reported instances where children accessed content considered inappropriate. However, the meaning of “inappropriate” is not fixed. For some families, it refers primarily to content that contradicts Islamic moral values, such as immodest behavior or gossip, while for others it is associated with excessive entertainment that disrupts learning focus. These differences indicate that content regulation is not only about restriction, but also about how families define and prioritize values.

Parental responses similarly vary. One informant, Mr. H (46 years old, civil servant), stated :

“If my child wants to watch YouTube, I ask them to do it in the living room so I can see. Sometimes I ask what the video is about, so they know I’m paying attention”

This approach reflects an interactive form of supervision, where control is exercised through presence and engagement rather than strict prohibition. In contrast, other families rely more heavily on pre-defined rules or technical filtering. These variations suggest that the enactment of *sadd al-dharā’i’* ranges from structured control to negotiated guidance, rather than following a single model.

In addition to these strategies, some families have begun to develop normative approaches in the form of digital communication ethics. Two out of five families mentioned informal agreements to avoid sharing unverified information, gossip, or potentially conflict-inducing messages. Notably, these practices are more explicitly articulated in families with higher educational backgrounds, where digital interaction is framed as part of ethical responsibility.

One informant, Mrs. D (48 years old, lecturer), explained :

“We agreed not to share anything provocative in the family group. If something seems inappropriate, we usually remind each other politely”

However, even in these cases, the data do not show consistent enforcement or uniform acceptance among all family members. As such, these

practices are better understood as emerging normative orientations rather than fully institutionalized systems.

Overall, these findings suggest that the application of *sadd al-dharā'ī* within Muslim families in Yogyakarta takes diverse and situational forms, including time regulation, content supervision, and the development of communication ethics. Importantly, these variations are not context-neutral, but are shaped by the socio-cultural characteristics of Yogyakarta as an urban-educational and religious environment.

In families with stronger educational backgrounds—such as those of teachers and lecturers—control practices tend to be more reflective and discussion-oriented, often framed in terms of learning discipline and critical media use. This reflects the broader educational culture of Yogyakarta, where digital media is not only restricted but also evaluated as part of children's intellectual development. In contrast, other families tend to emphasize more practical forms of regulation, such as limiting usage time or monitoring content, without always articulating these practices within a formal educational framework.

At the same time, Yogyakarta's strong religious social fabric also shapes how risks are perceived and managed. Concerns about inappropriate content are frequently linked not only to distraction or overuse, but also to the preservation of moral values and religious propriety, leading some families to frame digital supervision in explicitly ethical or religious terms. This is evident, for example, in the emergence of informal norms around avoiding provocative messages or unverified information in family communication.

These patterns suggest that the observed practices—while varied and not always consistently implemented—are embedded in a context where educational aspirations and religious commitments intersect, influencing how families interpret and respond to the challenges of digital media. Thus, rather than representing generic forms of digital parenting, the application of *sadd al-dharā'ī* in this study reflects a contextually shaped process of risk

management, grounded in the particular social and cultural environment of Yogyakarta.

Thus, rather than presenting a stable and structured model of digital media management, the findings point to a dynamic and often contested process of negotiation between potential benefits and risks. In this context, *sadd al-dharā'i'* does not operate merely as a set of abstract preventive principles, but becomes visible through the ways in which rules are formulated, negotiated, and enacted within the family.

The data indicate that parents—particularly mothers as primary caregivers—often play a central role in initiating rules, such as setting screen-time limits or determining appropriate spaces for device use. However, these rules are not always imposed unilaterally. In several cases, children actively negotiate these boundaries, for instance by requesting extended usage time for educational purposes or entertainment. This interaction suggests that regulation is not purely top-down, but involves ongoing adjustment between authority and accommodation.

At the same time, the effectiveness of these rules varies. Some families report relatively consistent enforcement, especially when rules are integrated into daily routines, while others acknowledge that restrictions are applied more flexibly and sometimes inconsistently. In such cases, rules may function less as strict controls and more as symbolic markers of parental concern, signaling expectations even when not fully enforced.

Tensions also emerge in the implementation process. Parents describe moments of conflict or resistance, particularly when children perceive restrictions as limiting their autonomy or social engagement. These tensions are often addressed through a combination of negotiation, persuasion, and selective enforcement, rather than through rigid disciplinary measures. As a result, the process of control becomes relational, involving continuous calibration rather than fixed regulation.

From this perspective, *sadd al-dharā'ī'* can be understood not simply as a principle of restriction, but as a socially embedded mechanism of anticipatory reasoning, through which families attempt to manage uncertainty and potential harm in everyday digital practices. It operates through dialogue, compromise, and sometimes contestation, reflecting the lived realities of family life rather than a uniform application of normative rules.

3. The Balance between *Maṣlaḥah* and *Sadd al-dharā'ī'* as the Foundation of a Sakinah Family in the Digital Era

An analysis of five Muslim families in Yogyakarta shows that the idea of “balance” between *maṣlaḥah* and *Sadd al-dharā'ī'* does not merely exist as a normative concept, but can be traced in the everyday practices through which families manage digital media. Rather than being understood as two separate principles, this balance emerges as a process of negotiation between utilization and restriction, taking place in a situational manner within the family context.

To avoid overly abstract interpretations, this study identifies this balance through three empirical indicators derived from the data: (1) the integration of digital media into family relations, (2) the presence of negotiated control mechanisms, and (3) the maintenance of the quality of family interaction.

First, in terms of integration, digital media does not fully replace family interaction but functions as a complement in maintaining communication and religious activities. In several families, messaging, sharing religious content, and online communication are used to sustain closeness when family members are not physically co-present. However, this integration does not produce uniform effects, as it depends on how family members respond to and interpret these interactions.

Second, in terms of control, balance is reflected in the efforts made by families to establish boundaries for digital media use, such as regulating time, location of use, or forms of parental accompaniment. These controls are

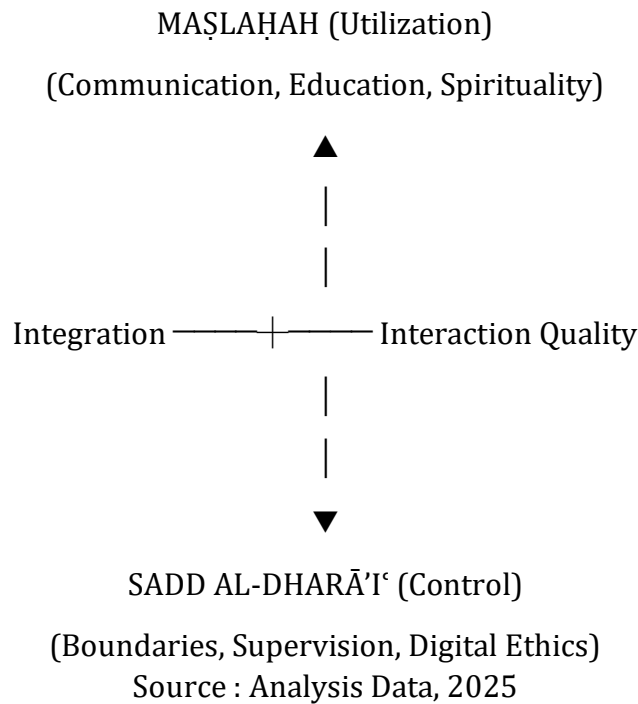
neither rigid nor entirely consistent; rather, they are negotiated according to the needs and circumstances of each family. In some cases, rules such as limiting screen time or restricting device use at certain moments function more as flexible guidelines than as strict disciplinary systems.¹⁴ This suggests that *Sadd al-dharā'i'* operates as a form of practical awareness rather than as a fully standardized regulatory mechanism.

Third, regarding the quality of interaction, balance can be observed in how families maintain what they perceive as meaningful communication, both through direct and digital interaction. Some families demonstrate simple practices such as reminding one another of religious obligations, sharing positive messages, or maintaining routine communication with family members living at a distance. These practices indicate efforts to preserve emotional closeness, even though they are not explicitly measured through quantitative indicators such as conflict frequency or relationship satisfaction.

Within the framework of *maqāsid al-sharī'ah*, these three indicators can be interpreted in more operational terms. The integration of religious activities into digital media relates to the preservation of religious values (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), while the regulation of media use and attention to learning-related distractions reflect *ḥifẓ al-ʿaql*. Efforts to maintain communication and familial closeness may be associated with *ḥifẓ al-nasl*. However, this mapping is not intended as a rigid categorization, but rather as a way to understand how families articulate values in their daily practices.

¹⁴ Stephanie C Milford, "Between Guidelines and Guilt : Parenting through the Chaos of Screen-Time Discourse," *Media, Culture & Society*, 2026, 1–10, <https://doi.org/10.1177/01634437251400650>; Robards et al., "Guiding Young People's Social Media Use in School Policies : Opportunities , Risks, Moral Panics, and Imagined Futures."

Figure. 1
Analytical Matrix of the Balance between Maşlahah and Sadd al-dharā'ī' in Digital Family Practices



The matrix above is not intended as a prescriptive model, but as an analytical tool derived from empirical findings. It visualises how the balance between *maşlahah* (utilisation) and *Sadd al-dharā'ī'* (control) operates through intersecting dimensions of practice, namely the integration of media use, control mechanisms, and interaction quality. These dimensions are further shaped by processes of value negotiation and risk adaptation observed across the five families.

Empirically, the findings indicate that families do not occupy a uniform position within this matrix. Some tend to emphasise utilisation (*maşlahah*), while others place greater weight on restriction (*Sadd al-dharā'ī'*). In several cases, what appears as “balance” is not a stable condition, but an ongoing process marked by tensions between the need to engage with digital media and concerns about its potential risks.

Accordingly, “balance” in this study is better understood as a spectrum of practices rather than a fixed equilibrium. It reflects how families

continuously adjust their strategies in response to changing contexts, experiences, and priorities.

Based on this perspective, the concept of a *sakinah* family in the digital context is not defined as a perfectly harmonious state, but as the capacity to manage relationships adaptively amidst technological change. Indicators of *sakinah* are therefore not reduced to a single variable, but emerge from a combination of reported experiences, including a sense of emotional closeness, continuity of communication, and shared efforts to uphold values in digital media use.

In this sense, the balance between *maṣlaḥah* and *Sadd al-dharā'ī'* functions not only as an ethical framework, but also as an analytical lens for understanding how Muslim families in Yogyakarta navigate digital media practices. Rather than producing a universal model, the findings highlight that such balancing practices are inherently contextual, shaped by internal family dynamics and continuously evolving over time.

C. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that digital media use among Muslim families in Yogyakarta cannot be simply understood as either a source of benefit or a source of harm. Rather, digital media constitutes a space of continuous negotiation in which families seek to maximize its benefits while anticipating its potential risks. In practice, *maṣlaḥah* is reflected in the use of digital media to sustain family communication, support educational activities, and strengthen religious engagement. Meanwhile, *Sadd al-dharā'ī'* is manifested through contextual forms of regulation, including screen-time management, parental guidance, content supervision, and the development of digital communication ethics. The findings further reveal that the relationship between *maṣlaḥah* and *Sadd al-dharā'ī'* does not represent a fixed equilibrium, but rather a spectrum of practices that continuously evolves according to each family's experiences, priorities, and internal dynamics. Therefore, a *sakinah* family in the digital era is no longer understood as an idealized condition of

perfect harmony or the absence of conflict, but as the capacity to maintain emotional closeness, sustain meaningful communication, negotiate the boundaries of digital media use, and preserve shared values amidst ongoing technological change.

These findings imply that strengthening family resilience in the digital era should not rely solely on restrictive or supervisory approaches to technology use. Instead, it requires the development of digital literacy that promotes a balanced orientation between maximizing benefits and managing potential risks in a proportionate manner. Furthermore, this study indicates that the enactment of *maṣlaḥah* and *Sadd al-dharā'ī'* within family life is deeply shaped by socio-cultural contexts, educational backgrounds, lived experiences, and the ways families interpret digital technology. Future research may therefore expand this inquiry by examining a broader range of socio-cultural settings and by exploring how differences in education, religiosity, and access to technology influence the ways families negotiate digital media practices. Such investigations would contribute to a deeper understanding of whether the patterns identified among Muslim families in Yogyakarta represent a broader tendency or, alternatively, a context-specific configuration shaped by particular social and cultural circumstances.

REFERENCES

- Ahmed, Habib. "Islamic Normative Legal Theory: Framework and Applications." *Journal OfLaw and Religion* 40, no. 1 (2025): 28–58. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jlr.2025.10056>.
- Aprilia Mega Rosdiana, Dessy Putri Wahyuningtyas, Devi Pramitha, Puspa Miladin Nuraida Safitri A. Basid. "Navigating Children's Digital World Safely: The Role of Positive Parenting through Digital Literacy in Densely Population Villages." *Gender Equality: International Journal of Child and Gender Studies* 11, no. 1 (2025). <https://doi.org/DOI:http://dx.doi.org/10.22373/equality.v11i1.26409>.
- Bani, Leonarda. "A Comparison of Parenting Strategies in a Digital Environment: A Systematic Literature Review." *Multimodal Technologies and Interaction* 8, no. 32 (2025). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3390/mti8040032>.

- Banks, Sarah, Teresa Bertotti, Daria Forlenza, Netanel Gemara, Michal Segal, Jane Shears, Ana M Sobočan, et al. "Slow Ethics in an Age of Fast Technology : The Ethical Implications of Industry 4 . 0 for Social Work Slow Ethics in an Age of Fast Technology : The Ethical." *Ethics and Social Welfare* 19, no. 2 (2025): 137–55. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17496535.2025.2512949>.
- Ciputra, William. "Awal Mula Yogyakarta Dijuluki Kota Pelajar." Kompas.com, 2022. <https://yogyakarta.kompas.com/read/2022/01/11/184512078/awal-mula-yogyakarta-dijuluki-kota-pelajar?page=all>.
- Huda, Sudirman Miftahul. "Axio-Awareness Principle in Javanese Marriage Prohibition as a Normative Framework for Anticipating Divorce Risk." *Justicia Islamica: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Dan Sosial* 23, no. 1 (2026): 347–80. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21154/justicia.v23i1.13197>.
- Humphry, Justine, Jonathon Hutchinson, and Olga Boichak. "Social Digital Dilemmas : Young People ' s and Parents ' Negotiation of Emerging Online Safety Issues." *New Media & Society* 28, no. 3 (2026): 1274–94. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448241310247>.
- Ibtihajuddin, Muhammad, Abdul Fattaah, Moch Nucholis, Zakka Asvi, and Aiful Shohi. "The Epistemology of Ijtihād Irsyādi in Fatwas : A Deconstruction of Takhrīj Ma ž Habi through Case Studies of the Lirboyo Fatwa Council." *Jurnal Al-Hakim : Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa, Studi Syariah, Hukum Dan Filantropi*, 2025, 135–58.
- Ichwan, Moh Nor, Faizal Amin, Abdullah Khusairi, and Bob Andrian. "Digitalization and the Shifting Religious Literature of Indonesian Muslims in the Era of Society 5 . 0." *Islamic Communication Journal* 9, no. 2 (2024): 245–65. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21580/icj.2024.9.2.22515> Digitalization.
- Indonesia, CNN. "Kominfo Jelaskan Kenapa Yogyakarta Paling Melek Digital Se-Indonesia." CNN Indonesia, 2023. <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/teknologi/20230201144041-192-907616/kominfo-jelaskan-kenapa-yogyakarta-paling-melek-digital-se-indonesia>.
- Lou, Jiaxue, Menmen Wang, Xiaoliang Xie, Feng Wang, Xudong Zhou, Jingjing Lu, and Hui Zhu. "The Association between Family Socio- Demographic Factors , Parental Mediation and Adolescents ' Digital Literacy : A Cross-Sectional Study." *BMC Public Health*, 2024. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-024-20284-4>.
- Lovari, Alessandro, and Shannon A Bowen. "Social Media in Disaster Communication : A Case Study of Strategies, Barriers, and Ethical

- Implications." *Journal of Public Affairs* 20, no. 1 (2020): 2. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.1967>.
- Milford, Stephanie C. "Between Guidelines and Guilt: Parenting through the Chaos of Screen-Time Discourse." *Media, Culture & Society*, 2026, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01634437251400650>.
- Mukhlis, Doki Wardiman, Amelia Yetri. "Indonesian Muslim Societies in the Digital Age: Opportunities, Challenges, and Future Prospects." *Digital Muslim Review* 2, no. 2 (2024): 194–216. <https://doi.org/10.32678/dmr.v2i2.46>.
- Nasarudin et., Al. *Studi Kasus Dan Multi Situs Dalam Pendekatan Kualitatif*. Padang: CV Gita Lentera, 2023.
- Rahmawati, Anisa. "Digital Literacy in The Family (Case Study of Restricting Youtube Use in Children)." In *Proceeding Jogjakarta Communication Conference*, 3:92–98, 2021.
- Robards, Brady, James Goring, Natalie Ann Hendry, Brady Robards, and James Goring. "Guiding Young People's Social Media Use in School Policies: Opportunities, Risks, Moral Panics, and Imagined Futures." *Journal of Youth Studies* 6261 (2025): 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2025.2468477>.
- Sianturi, Yelinka Maresa. "DIY Raih Penetrasi Internet Tertinggi Se-Indonesia." DATASATU.COM, 2025. <https://datasatu.com/teknologi-dan-informasi/2819492/10-provinsi-dengan-penetrasi-internet-tertinggi>.
- Social, We Are. "Digital 2026: Tren Digital Dan Media Sosial Teratas Di Indonesia." We Are Social, 2026. https://wearesocial-com.translate.googleusercontent.com/blog/2025/11/digital-2026-top-digital-and-social-media-trends-in-indonesia/?_x_tr_sl=en&_x_tr_tl=id&_x_tr_hl=id&_x_tr_pto=sge#:~:text=Warga Indonesia menghabiskan waktu luar biasa yaitu,menonton video online — itu lebih dari.
- Statistik, Badan Pusat. "Persentase Rumah Tangga Yang Pernah Mengakses Internet Dalam 3 Bulan Terakhir Menurut Provinsi Dan Klasifikasi Daerah, 2024." Badan Pusat Statistik, 2024. <https://www.bps.go.id/id/statistics-table/2/Mzk4Izl=/persentase-rumah-tangga-yang-pernah-mengakses-internet-dalam-3-bulan-terakhir-menurut-provinsi-dan-klasifikasi-daerah.html>.
- Suryana, Angga. "Studi Kasus Warga Multikultural Yogyakarta Di Era Digital Dan Peran Pendidikan Agama Islam." *JDP (JURNAL DINAMIKA PENDIDIKAN)* 11, no. 2017 (2025): 126–34.
- Uami Niki Kusaini, Nurul Husna, Yodia Setiawati, Zidan Alhamdika, M Reza Pratama. "Pengaruh Media Sosial Terhadap Hubungan Dan Interaksi

Antar Keluarga.” *INNOVATIVE: Journal Of Social Science Research* Volume 4, no. 3 (2024): 9265–73.

Wal, Amber Van Der, Patti M Valkenburg, and Loes Keijsers. “Parent – Adolescent Communication in a Digital World: A 100- - Day Diary Study.” *Child Development* 96 (2025): 736–51. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.14203>.

Wibisono, Yusuf. “The Concept of Maqāṣid Al-Shari’ah and Ma ṣ La ḥ Ah in the Classical and Contemporary Tafsîr.” *International Journal of Islamic Economics and Business Sustainability (IJIEBS)* 1, no. 2 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.7454/ijiebs.v1i2.1021>.