

Exposing Marital Conflicts on Social Media in the Perspective of Islamic Family Law

Muhammad Amin Yalinawa^{1*}

¹ Islamic Family Law Study Program State Islamic University Datokarama Palu, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: Muhammad Amin Yalinawa E-mail: aminyalinawa@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The development of digital technology has transformed social interactions, including the public disclosure of domestic issues on social media. This study analyzes the influence of social media on the exposure of marital disputes and examines the phenomenon from the perspective of Islamic Family Law. Employing a juridical-normative approach supplemented by sociological analysis, the research reviews literature, fatwas, and contemporary scholarly opinions. Findings indicate that publicizing family conflicts on social platforms can violate core principles of Islamic Family Law, particularly the protection of honor (hifz al-'ird) and the injunction to conceal faults (sitr). Such practices may damage family reputation, foster slander, and undermine marriage's purpose as a source of tranquility (sakinah). Therefore, legal awareness and digital ethics grounded in sharia values are needed to ensure conflict resolution preserves family dignity and harmony in the era of social media.

1. Introduction

The development of information and communication technology has fundamentally changed patterns of social interaction, including within family life. Social media, which initially served merely as a medium of communication and entertainment, has now become a public space where individuals openly express their private lives. This phenomenon has led to a new practice in which domestic conflicts are no longer private matters but are disseminated to the wider public through digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube (Rofiq, 2019). This situation creates social and legal consequences, especially when such exposure contains elements of defamation, insult, or violation of another person's honor (Indrayana, 2021).

From the perspective of Islamic Family Law, exposing domestic disputes to the public contradicts the principles of sitr (concealing faults) and hifz al-'ird (protecting honor) (Az-Zuhaili, 2013). Islam views the family as a sacred institution whose dignity must be preserved, as stated in the Qur'an, Surah An-Nur [24]:19, which warns against spreading immorality within society (Kementerian Agama RI, 2015). However, the open and unrestricted nature of social media often causes moral and ethical values to be overlooked. Emotional impulses, the pursuit of social validation, and even the economic benefits of viral content often motivate individuals to expose their domestic lives in digital public spaces (Hidayah, 2022).

This phenomenon poses serious challenges to the application of Islamic Family Law in the digital era. The principles of sakinah (tranquility), rahmah (compassion), and the protection of family honor must be reintroduced within the context of an increasingly open modern society (Al-Qaradawi, 2014). Therefore, this research seeks to analyze the influence of social media on the exposure of domestic disputes and examine the phenomenon from the perspective of Islamic Family Law. It is

* **Muhammad Amin Yalinawa** is Student Islamic Family Law Study Program at Postgraduate School, State Islamic University Datokarama Palu, Indonesia. This paper was presented at the 4th International Conference on Islamic and Interdisciplinary Studies (ICIIS) 2025, as a presenter, held by the Postgraduate School State Islamic University Datokarama Palu, Indonesia.

expected that this study will contribute to a more contextual understanding of how Islamic law can provide ethical and normative guidance in preserving family harmony amid the challenges of digital culture (Tarigan, 2020). Furthermore, the study aims to explore how digital platform can be utilized to promote values of mutual respect and privacy within Muslim Families. Ultimately, this research aspires to bridge the gap between traditional islamic norms and contemporary social realities shaped by digital communication.

2. Literature Review

Social media has become a significant phenomenon in modern society, influencing how humans interact, including within family life. Kaplan and Haenlein define social media as an Internet-based platform that enables users to create and share content through virtual communities (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). In the domestic sphere, social media can strengthen family communication, but it can also create problems when used to express conflict publicly. A study by Hidayah (2022) found that the tendency to upload household issues on social media is often driven by psychological needs such as seeking emotional support, public attention, or self-justification. This indicates that social media has blurred the boundaries between the private and public spheres in family relationships.

From the perspective of Islamic Family Law, exposing domestic conflict to the public contradicts the principles of *sitr* (concealing faults) and *ḥifẓ al-'ird* (protecting honor). Islam emphasizes the importance of maintaining family secrets as a moral responsibility and a means to safeguard personal dignity (Az-Zuhaili, 2013). According to Al-Qaradawi (2014), preserving family honor is part of the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, which aims to protect honor ('ird) and lineage (nasl). Therefore, in facing the digital era, Islamic legal values must be recontextualized to provide ethical guidance for the use of social media. This research contributes to the conceptual understanding of Islamic Family Law that remains relevant to the contemporary social challenges of openness and digitalization (Tarigan, 2020).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Types and Approaches

This research adopts a qualitative approach with a normative-juridical type supported by sociological analysis. The qualitative method is applied to explore meanings, values, and Islamic legal principles related to the exposure of marital disputes on social media (Creswell, 2013). The normative-juridical aspect focuses on examining Islamic Family Law sources—such as the Qur'an, Hadith, fiqh, and the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI)—while the sociological dimension provides insight into the social dynamics shaping this phenomenon in the digital era (Anwar, 2015; Auda, 2008).

3.2 Data Sources

The research relies primarily on secondary data, consisting of library materials such as books, journal articles, official documents, and Islamic legal sources relevant to family law and digital ethics. The primary references include the Qur'an, Hadith, *Kompilasi Hukum Islam* (Compilation of Islamic Law), and Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage (Republic of Indonesia, 1974; KHI, 1991). Supporting data are obtained from scholarly works by Islamic jurists, contemporary researchers, and publications discussing the intersection between social media and Islamic ethics (Auda, 2008; Az-Zuhaili, 2013).

3.3 Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through documentary study (library research), which involves identifying, reviewing, and analyzing relevant literature. This technique was chosen because the study focuses on conceptual and normative issues rather than empirical observation. The researcher examined classical fiqh texts, modern Islamic legal commentaries, and academic journals that discuss the ethics of privacy and honor in digital spaces (Anwar, 2015; Zuhrah, 2023).

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed qualitatively using content analysis and descriptive interpretation of legal texts and relevant media reports to identify Islamic legal principles and compare them with observed social practices.

4. Results and Discussion

Based on the qualitative, normative-juridical, and sociological approaches adopted in this research, the findings are presented by integrating legal analysis with the social realities surrounding the exposure of marital disputes on social media.

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This section discusses how Islamic Family Law principles interact with the dynamics of digital culture, as well as the ethical challenges that emerge from the transformation of private family matters into public discourse. The rapid expansion of social media has created a new space for personal expression and public communication, which has inevitably influenced family life. Social networking platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have become arenas where individuals not only share daily experiences but also expose aspects of their private lives, including marital conflicts. This exposure often arises from emotional dissatisfaction, the pursuit of public sympathy, or economic motivations related to digital content monetization (Papacharissi, 2011). Consequently, what was once considered private within marriage is now consumed as a form of public entertainment or moral discourse in the digital sphere.

From the perspective of Islamic Family Law, this phenomenon challenges the traditional understanding of *sitr* (concealment of faults) and *hifz al-'ird* (protection of honor). These principles are fundamental to maintaining the sanctity of marriage and family integrity. Islamic scholars such as Wahbah az-Zuhaili (2013) emphasize that protecting family honor (*al-'ird*) is part of the *maqasid al-shariah*—the higher objectives of Islamic law aimed at preserving moral and social order. Therefore, disclosing marital disputes online contradicts the ethical framework of Islam, which encourages reconciliation and privacy between spouses rather than public exposure.

In addition, the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI) and Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage in Indonesia both uphold the value of harmony and confidentiality in family life. Article 33 of the Marriage Law emphasizes the principle of mutual respect and support between husband and wife, while Article 77(3) of the KHI mandates the settlement of domestic disputes through mediation and family deliberation before involving legal institutions. These provisions align with Islamic teachings that prioritize internal resolution and forgiveness as the foundation of a harmonious family (Auda, 2008).

However, the open nature of social media has blurred the boundaries between private and public life, making these legal and moral principles increasingly difficult to uphold. The psychological urge for validation through likes, comments, and followers encourages individuals to disclose personal experiences that were traditionally private (Hidayah, 2022). This shift reflects not only a behavioral change but also a transformation of moral values in digital society, where social recognition often takes precedence over ethical considerations rooted in religion.

The exposure of marital conflicts on social media also raises legal and ethical implications for the protection of privacy and human dignity in Islamic law. The act of publicly disclosing a spouse's faults can be categorized as a violation of *hurmat al-insan* (human dignity) and may lead to defamation or humiliation, both of which are prohibited in Islam (az-Zuhaili, 2013). In the digital era, these actions can spread rapidly and cause enduring harm, contradicting the Qur'anic command in Surah al-Hujurat [49]:12, which forbids spying, suspicion, and backbiting among believers. Therefore, online behavior must be guided by ethical awareness that reflects the moral objectives of *sharia* (*maqasid al-shariah*) in maintaining social harmony.

Moreover, the misuse of social media within marital relationships often reflects a lack of digital literacy and religious understanding. Studies have shown that individuals who lack awareness of Islamic ethical principles are more prone to use social media irresponsibly in expressing emotions and conflicts (Umar, 2021). Strengthening digital ethics education based on Islamic values is therefore essential to prevent the normalization of such behavior. This approach can help Muslims navigate online spaces while upholding the values of modesty (*haya'*), mutual respect, and justice within the family.

At the same time, the role of religious leaders and community institutions becomes crucial in shaping moral behavior in the digital context. Mosques, family counseling centers, and Islamic universities can serve as platforms for disseminating religious knowledge and promoting ethical conduct on social media (Tarigan, 2020). Through religious education and community engagement, individuals can be encouraged to resolve marital conflicts privately and constructively, in accordance with Islamic law and moral discipline. Such preventive measures align with the prophetic tradition that emphasizes reconciliation (*islah*) as a noble act before God.

In summary, the phenomenon of exposing marital disputes on social media represents a collision between technological advancement and moral responsibility. While social media offers platforms for expression and communication, its misuse undermines the spiritual and ethical foundations of family life as envisioned in Islamic law. Therefore, Islamic Family Law must not only function as a set of normative rules but also evolve as a moral compass guiding digital behavior among Muslim families. The integration of legal, ethical, and educational efforts will be essential in ensuring that family harmony (*sakinah, mawaddah, wa rahmah*) remains intact amidst the challenges of the digital age.

5. Conclusion

The phenomenon of exposing marital disputes on social media illustrates a critical intersection between technological progress and moral responsibility within Muslim family life. The openness of digital platforms has challenged traditional Islamic values such as *sitr* (concealment of faults) and *hifz al-'ird* (protection of honor), leading to the erosion of privacy and family harmony. From the perspective of Islamic Family Law, such behavior contradicts the ethical and legal foundations that prioritize internal reconciliation (*islah*), mutual respect, and the preservation of human dignity. Therefore, Islamic legal principles must be continuously recontextualized to respond to contemporary social dynamics, ensuring that the spirit of sharia remains relevant in guiding moral conduct in the digital era.

To address these challenges, a holistic approach that integrates legal, ethical, and educational dimensions is essential. Religious leaders, educational institutions, and digital media platforms should collaborate in promoting awareness of Islamic digital ethics and the moral responsibilities that accompany online expression. Through this integration, Islamic Family Law can function not only as a normative framework but also as a moral compass that upholds family integrity (*sakinah, mawaddah, wa rahmah*) amid the growing influence of social media culture. In doing so, Muslim families can navigate modernity without compromising the sacred values that form the foundation of Islamic family life.

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