

## **Digital *Fiqh* and Ethical Governance: Negotiating Islamic Normativity and Online Narcissism in Contemporary Indonesia**

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**Abstract:** The proliferation of digital technologies and social media in Indonesia—home to the world's largest Muslim population—has introduced complex ethical challenges that exceed the boundaries of classical Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). This article critically examines how the rise of online narcissistic behaviors—characterized by excessive self-presentation, validation-seeking, and performative religiosity—reshapes ethical consciousness and disrupts normative Islamic frameworks. Drawing on Relational Identity Theory as an analytical lens, the study explores the tensions between individual autonomy and communal responsibility within digital spheres. Methodologically, this research employs a qualitative content analysis of online interactions, complemented by in-depth interviews with Islamic scholars and digital media experts. Findings reveal that digital platforms function not merely as communicative tools but as contested ethical arenas wherein Islamic norms are negotiated, reinterpreted, and at times subverted. In response, the article proposes a conceptual model of “Digital Fiqh Governance,” which seeks to integrate classical Islamic ethical principles with the emergent moral logics of digital life. This model offers practical and normative guidance for fostering responsible digital conduct grounded in Islamic values. Ultimately, the study argues that the unregulated expansion of online narcissism necessitates a reconfiguration of *fiqh*-based ethical governance to safeguard moral integrity in contemporary Muslim societies.

**Keywords:** Digital *Fiqh*; Ethical Governance; Identity; Narcissism.

### **Introduction**

The digital transformation of contemporary Indonesian society has radically altered how Muslims engage with religious norms, articulate identities, and perform ethical commitments (Ghofar et al., 2024; Mukhlis et al., 2025; Sito Rohmawati et al., 2025). As one of the world's most digitally connected populations, Indonesian Muslims are increasingly navigating a socio-technological landscape where traditional boundaries between public and private, religious and secular, are blurred by algorithmic mediation. Digital platforms, once perceived as neutral channels for communication, have evolved into powerful sites for religious expression, moral negotiation, and identity formation (Mundzir et al., 2023; Zijderveld, 2023). While these developments offer new opportunities for religious engagement and knowledge dissemination, they also pose unprecedented ethical dilemmas that challenge the epistemological foundations of classical *fiqh* (Muttaqin et al., 2022).

Among the most pressing of these dilemmas is the phenomenon of online narcissism (Musarrat et al., 2022; Waliyuddin, 2019)—manifested in practices such as excessive self-display, algorithm-driven validation-seeking, and performative religiosity. These behaviors not only distort Islamic conceptions of sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*), humility, and communal accountability, but also create a quasi-moral environment in which ethical boundaries are continually negotiated and destabilized. In such environments, digital users

oscillate between self-expression and collective ethical norms, often without clear jurisprudential guidance (Hayat, 2022).

The epistemic tension at the heart of this transformation lies in the misalignment between classical Islamic legal methodologies—developed in pre-digital societies marked by stable, face-to-face interactions—and the fluid, hyper-mediated realities of digital life. *Fiqh*, as a discipline historically grounded in textual interpretation and analogical reasoning (*qiyās*) (Parrey, 2024), is increasingly strained by the abstract, dynamic, and relational nature of online behavior (Karčić, 2019). As a result, many Muslim users find themselves navigating ethically ambiguous digital spaces without adequate normative frameworks, leading to a fragmentation of ethical consciousness and a weakening of communal moral authority.

Existing scholarship on Islam and digital culture in Indonesia has made significant contributions by examining themes such as online *da'wah*, digital religious authority, and the democratization of Islamic knowledge (Abidin, 2018; Febrian, 2024; Hadi, 2021; Handayani, 2021; Hayat, 2022; Kloos et al., 2025; Lim, 2017; Slama, 2025; Yazid, 2023). However, these studies often overlook the deeper ethical implications of algorithmic identity construction and the psychological effects of online narcissism. Furthermore, little attention has been paid to how digital relationality—shaped by likes, follows, and algorithmic visibility—challenges traditional Islamic concepts of accountability, modesty, and sincerity. There remains a notable gap in the literature regarding the integration of Islamic legal-ethical norms with the affective and performative dimensions of digital life.

This article seeks to fill that gap by offering both a theoretical intervention and a practical framework for what we term “Digital *Fiqh* Governance.” Anchored in relational identity theory, this study examines how the algorithmic structures of social media mediate ethical subjectivities among Indonesian Muslim users and how Islamic jurisprudence might be recontextualized to offer morally responsive guidance. The central premise is that digital engagement is not merely a technical or behavioral phenomenon, but a deeply ethical one that demands renewed normative reflection.

The significance of this research is twofold. First, it contributes to the theoretical development of Islamic digital ethics by bridging the disciplinary divide between *fiqh* and digital studies. Second, it offers a constructive response to the moral vacuum created by unregulated online narcissism, proposing context-sensitive principles for cultivating a digitally ethical Muslim subjectivity. In doing so, this article aligns with broader scholarly efforts to rethink Islamic normativity considering contemporary social transformations and contributes to ongoing debates around religion, technology, and ethical governance in the Muslim world.

## Literature Review

This study draws upon two principal theoretical foundations—Relational Identity Theory and Islamic Ethical Governance within *Fiqh* Discourse—to critically analyze the negotiation of Islamic normativity in the context of rising online narcissism in Indonesia's digital ecosystem.

Relational identity theory, as articulated by Stryker and Burke (2000), posits that identity is neither fixed nor self-contained but is socially constructed and continuously negotiated within dynamic relational contexts. Identity salience and behavioral expression are shaped by interactions with reference groups, whose validation, expectations, and feedback inform an individual's sense of self. In digital environments, these reference groups are radically expanded and algorithmically structured, encompassing not only personal contacts but also anonymous virtual audiences, engagement metrics (likes, shares, comments), and shifting platform norms (Abidin, 2018). As a result, social media encourages performative behaviors aimed at maximizing visibility, affirmation, and interaction. From this perspective, narcissistic self-presentation in digital spaces is best understood as a relationally constructed identity performance—amplified and incentivized by algorithmic architectures and audience feedback loops.

While relational identity theory provides a useful sociological lens for understanding the performative nature of digital identity, it is insufficient to account for the ethical and religious dimensions that underpin the digital practices of Indonesian Muslim users. Religious values remain

central to identity construction in Indonesia, where Islamic ethical norms continue to shape both individual moral consciousness and communal expectations. For this reason, the study integrates a second theoretical lens: Islamic Ethical Governance within the framework of *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence).

*Fiqh*, as a historically grounded and normatively rich interpretive tradition, represents the human effort to understand (Warman, Zainuddin, et al., 2023) and apply the divine will (*Shari'ah*) in regulating behavior across all dimensions of life, including social and moral domains (Kamali, 2008). Classical *fiqh* provides a structured moral taxonomy—comprising categories such as *wajib* (obligatory), *sunnah* (recommended), *mubah* (permissible), *makrūh* (discouraged), and *harām* (prohibited)—that enables the ethical classification of actions and decisions (Hallaq, 2009). These categories are not static; rather, they are responsive to context and capable of being reinterpreted to address novel circumstances. In the digital context, this taxonomy offers a potential normative framework for evaluating behaviors such as excessive self-promotion, curated religiosity, or attention-seeking moral posturing.

By integrating Relational Identity Theory with a *fiqh*-based model of ethical governance, this study proposes a novel conceptual framework termed "Digital *Fiqh* Governance." This framework reconceptualizes digital platforms not merely as social tools, but as morally consequential spaces wherein identity is performed under the simultaneous pressures of algorithmic visibility and religious accountability. Within this framework, online narcissism among Indonesian Muslims is approached not simply as a psychological or social phenomenon, but as a site of ethical negotiation—where individual desires for self-expression and visibility must be balanced against communal ethical responsibilities derived from Islamic teachings.

This theoretical synthesis addresses a significant lacuna in current scholarship. While media studies have explored online narcissism from psychological (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and sociological (Goffman, 2023) angles, and Islamic studies have examined digital religious authority and ethics (Husein & Slama, 2018; Lim, 2017), few attempts have been made to systematically integrate identity theory with *fiqh*-derived ethical frameworks. As such, this study's principal theoretical contribution lies in developing a context-sensitive model of normative digital governance that is both theologically grounded and sociologically informed—offering a more comprehensive understanding of the ethical behaviors and struggles of Muslim users in Indonesia's digital landscape.

In operationalizing this framework, the study investigates how digital actors interpret, appropriate, and negotiate Islamic ethical norms in their everyday online interactions. Special attention is paid to: (1) the ways users reconcile tensions between personal freedom and communal moral responsibility; (2) how Islamic scholars reinterpret *fiqh* categories in light of emerging digital behaviors; and (3) how digital media experts conceptualize new ethical paradigms of online conduct. The integration of these perspectives allows this research to move beyond abstraction, offering both theoretical advancement and practical tools for shaping ethical digital cultures among Muslim communities. Ultimately, "Digital *Fiqh* Governance" serves as a foundational model for addressing the moral risks associated with online narcissism while reinforcing an Islamic framework of ethical accountability in the digital age.

## Method

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore how Indonesian Muslim social media users negotiate Islamic ethical norms in response to the growing prevalence of online narcissism. Given the subjective and context-dependent nature of ethical reasoning and identity formation in digital environments, a qualitative approach is considered most appropriate to capture the depth and complexity of users' lived experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data were collected through two primary methods: qualitative content analysis and in-depth semi-structured interviews. The content analysis focused on user interactions across three dominant social media platforms in Indonesia—Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube—selected based on their high user engagement and their significant role in fostering identity performance and religious expression. Publicly accessible user-generated content, including posts, comments, and engagement patterns that exhibit elements of online narcissism and performative religiosity, were systematically analyzed while adhering to strict ethical guidelines to ensure privacy and

confidentiality. Complementing this, participants were purposively selected using a maximum variation sampling strategy, encompassing three key respondent groups: Islamic scholars with expertise in *fiqh* and ethics, digital media experts familiar with online behavioral trends, and active Muslim social media users. Data from these interviews, conducted between January and April 2025, provided rich, first-hand insights into how ethical dilemmas are experienced, interpreted, and negotiated by diverse stakeholders within the digital landscape. To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of findings, methodological triangulation was applied by integrating data from content analysis and interviews, supported by member checking and peer debriefing sessions with scholars specializing in Islamic studies and digital sociology.

## Results and Discussion

### Ethical Disorientation in Digital Self-Representation

The emergence of digital platforms as dominant spaces for self-expression has led to a significant transformation in how Indonesian Muslims represent their religious identities online. This transformation is not merely technical but deeply ethical, producing what can be termed as "ethical disorientation in digital self-representation." Ethical disorientation here refers to the ambiguity, tension, and moral confusion experienced by users when balancing personal religious authenticity with the performative demands of digital visibility and engagement metrics.

One key finding from the content analysis is that social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have become arenas where religious identity is commodified. Users often post religiously themed content such as Qur'anic verses, Islamic motivational quotes, or images wearing Islamic attire like the *hijab* or *gamis*, but these are often presented in highly stylized and aestheticized formats that align with broader social media trends for visual appeal (Amin & Ali, 2021). For example, it was observed that a number of young Muslim influencers used filters, dramatic background music, and professional-grade editing software to enhance the emotional and visual impact of their religious content. This kind of presentation, while not inherently unethical, raises questions about the user's primary motivation—whether it is driven by *dakwah* (Islamic missionary intentions) or by the desire for social validation (Lengauer, 2018).

Interviews with several active Muslim content creators further confirm this dilemma. Many openly admitted feeling torn between the obligation to deliver authentic religious messages and the pressure to gain followers, likes, and monetization opportunities. One female influencer noted, "If I post just a simple video about Islamic values without attractive visuals or trending music, my engagement drops significantly. But if I make it more entertaining, people watch, even if the content becomes less serious." This reflects a growing trend where religious messaging is shaped, and sometimes diluted, by the platform algorithms that reward entertainment value over content depth.

Theoretically, this phenomenon aligns with the framework of relational identity theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000), which posits that identity is not static but shaped through social interactions and context-based validation. In the digital context, relational identity is heavily influenced by the feedback loop of likes, comments, and shares. Users develop their online religious personas based on the perceived expectations of their audience, which can lead to the overemphasis of performative elements at the expense of spiritual sincerity.

Another significant ethical issue identified in the data is the phenomenon of "religious clickbait." Several users craft provocative religious-themed headlines or thumbnails—such as "You Won't Believe What Happens After This Prayer" or "3 Easy Ways to Enter Heaven"—to lure viewers. While these strategies increase visibility, they risk trivializing religious teachings and reducing complex theological concepts into oversimplified, attention-grabbing content. According to Kamali (2008), one of the principles of Islamic ethics is the preservation of religious dignity (*hifz al-din*) (Juliansyahzen & Ocktoberrinsyah, 2022), which may be compromised by such sensationalist approaches.

Furthermore, the study found that digital users often engage in "virtue signaling," where religious symbols and expressions are used not purely as acts of faith but as social currency to gain recognition. This includes excessive posting of charitable acts, public prayers, or participation in religious campaigns with

the primary goal of self-promotion rather than genuine spiritual commitment. From an Islamic ethical standpoint, this practice closely borders on *riya'* (showing off good deeds), which is condemned in many Quranic verses and hadiths. Islamic scholars interviewed expressed their concern that such practices distort the intention (*niyyah*) behind religious acts, which should be directed solely towards Allah.

Moreover, the speed and scale of content dissemination exacerbate ethical disorientation. The real-time feedback mechanisms embedded in social media platforms encourage users to prioritize instant gratification over long-term moral reflection. As one participant put it, "When you see hundreds of people liking your post about giving charity, it's hard not to want to post again, even if your heart wasn't in the right place the first time." This tendency aligns with what Lim (2017) described as the "algorithmic shaping of moral behavior," where technology subtly nudges users toward behavior that maximizes engagement rather than ethical correctness.

An interesting subtheme that emerged from the interviews is the role of peer pressure in digital religious identity formation. Many users admitted feeling compelled to post religious content during Islamic holy months like Ramadan, not necessarily because of heightened personal faith, but because of fear of social judgment if they remained silent while others publicly displayed piety. This phenomenon resonates with Goffman's (2023) dramaturgical theory, where individuals manage their self-presentation in public settings to avoid stigma or gain social approval. The digital world, in this sense, becomes a stage where religious identity is performed, negotiated, and at times, commodified.

Another ethical ambiguity highlighted by participants is the monetization of religious content. Several popular Muslim YouTubers interviewed confessed that they earn substantial income from ad revenue linked to their religious videos (Anshori & Juliansyahzen, 2022; Hasanudin et al., 2023; Yazid, 2023). While earning a living is not prohibited in Islam, the commercialization of *dakwah* raises concerns about the dilution of religious sincerity. Some respondents even mentioned that certain influencers deliberately produce controversial or sensational content to increase traffic, further complicating the ethical landscape of digital religious expression (KhosraviNik, 2022).

The problem of selective religiosity also surfaced in the findings. Users often showcase certain religious practices—such as charity work or Quran recitation—while neglecting others that are less visually appealing or harder to display online, like patience, humility, or private prayers. This selective representation risks promoting a fragmented understanding of Islam that overemphasizes performative acts while sidelining foundational ethical principles.

Lastly, the study found that younger users, especially those under 25, are more vulnerable to ethical disorientation. This is partly due to their developmental stage of identity formation and their exposure to social media from an early age (Piwko et al., 2021). In summary, ethical disorientation in digital self-representation among Indonesian Muslim users is a multifaceted issue driven by platform algorithms, audience expectations, peer pressures, and personal identity struggles (Dillon, 2019; Khramova, 2023). The blending of religious content with online narcissistic practices creates a complex moral environment that demands critical attention from both users and Islamic scholars. The need for a clearer, context-sensitive framework for Digital Fiqh Governance is evident, not to suppress digital expression but to ensure that such expressions remain ethically sound and spiritually sincere in alignment with Islamic values.

### **The Contestation and Decentralization of Religious Authority**

The rise of digital media in Indonesia has not only transformed modes of communication but also significantly altered the landscape of (Anshori & Juliansyahzen, 2022). This study found that digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook have facilitated the decentralization of religious authority, leading to ethical, theological, and sociological contestations regarding who holds the right to represent Islam in the public sphere. The emergence of online preachers (*ustadz digital*), independent religious influencers, and algorithm-driven *da'i* has reconfigured how religious knowledge is produced, distributed, and consumed by Indonesian Muslims (Hadi, 2021; Hayat, 2022).

Historically, religious authority in Indonesia has been vested in traditional institutions such as pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) (Muafiah et al., 2022), formal Islamic universities, and recognized mass organizations like Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah. These institutions have maintained

rigorous academic, theological, and epistemological standards for the transmission of Islamic knowledge (Bhojani & Clarke, 2023). The legitimacy of religious figures was grounded in their educational background, *ijazah* (authorization from recognized scholars), and their embeddedness in local religious communities. However, the digital era has introduced a new logic of religious authority: one that is shaped less by epistemic legitimacy and more by algorithmic visibility, audience engagement, and follower count (Slama, 2025; Warman, Elimartati, et al., 2023).

Data from interviews with Islamic scholars reveal a growing concern over what they term "algorithmic ulama" or "populist preachers." These are individuals who, despite lacking formal religious education, gain massive digital followings by delivering simplified, emotionally charged, and often sensationalist religious content (Maemonah et al., 2023). One senior ulama interviewed noted, "Today, people don't ask who the ustadz studied with or what books they've mastered. They just look at subscriber counts or how viral a video is. This is dangerous for the future of Islamic knowledge." This comment reflects the anxiety felt by traditional scholars regarding the epistemic dilution of religious authority in the digital public sphere.

Applying relational identity theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000), this phenomenon can be understood as a shift from categorical identity—where religious authority is institutionally defined and socially recognized—to relational identity, which emerges from interactions within digital networks. In this new ecology, the validation of a preacher's religious authority is determined less by formal certification and more by audience engagement and interactivity. This leads to a form of "networked authority," where the digital crowd plays an active role in constructing and legitimizing religious figures (Hayat, 2022; Yazid, 2023).

The consequences of this shift are manifold. First, there is a rise in fragmented fatwas and religious rulings circulating online, often devoid of rigorous scholarly reasoning (*ijtihad*). Popular preachers frequently issue opinions on complex fiqh matters such as halal-haram consumer products, gender roles, and Islamic finance without sufficient reference to *usul al-fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudential methodology). One case study from the data illustrates how a viral TikTok video by a self-proclaimed ustadz declared that certain digital behaviors like using Instagram filters were haram, sparking widespread debate among Muslim youth online (Chakim, 2022). The rapid spread of such content, often lacking scholarly review, creates confusion and polarization within the Muslim community.

Second, the democratization of religious knowledge production means that anyone with access to a smartphone and basic internet literacy can present themselves as a religious authority. This accessibility creates a double-edged sword. On one hand, it enables greater participation and inclusivity, giving voice to marginalized groups and grassroots da'wah movements. On the other hand, it risks producing an unregulated flow of religious discourse, where misinformation, theological reductionism, and even extremism can flourish unchecked (Nisa, 2018).

Moreover, the interviews reveal that even traditional ulama are beginning to feel pressured to adapt to the digital logic of visibility. Some pesantren and Islamic universities have started investing in social media teams to increase their online presence. One senior academic stated, "We cannot remain silent. If we don't enter this digital space, others with less credible knowledge will dominate the narrative." This pragmatic shift shows that even the custodians of traditional religious authority recognize the strategic necessity of engaging with digital platforms to retain their influence.

A further dimension of this contestation is the commercialization of religious authority. Many digital preachers now engage in brand endorsements, online merchandise sales, and paid religious webinars. While monetization is not inherently problematic, the blending of dakwah with commercial interests raises ethical questions about sincerity, authenticity, and the commodification of sacred knowledge (Hartono, 2018; Savitri Hartono, 2015). Some interviewees expressed discomfort with how certain preachers tailor their religious content to suit market demand, prioritizing topics that generate higher engagement while sidelining critical or controversial theological discussions.

In addition, the study found a generational divide in the perception of religious authority. Younger Muslim users, especially those aged between 18-30, tend to trust and follow digital influencers whose language, aesthetic style, and digital literacy align with their own media consumption patterns. In contrast,

older Muslims remain more attached to traditional religious institutions. This generational gap in religious authority recognition underscores the socio-cultural shifts induced by digital media, raising concerns about long-term implications for Islamic knowledge transmission.

From a governance perspective, the decentralization of religious authority challenges existing frameworks of religious regulation in Indonesia. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) traditionally serve as gatekeepers of religious orthodoxy. However, the decentralized, transnational, and decentralized nature of digital *dakwah* makes top-down control increasingly difficult. Content moderation efforts, such as the cyber-dakwah monitoring units initiated by several Islamic organizations, represent initial steps toward addressing this issue, but their reach and impact remain limited given the sheer scale of online religious content production.

An important finding is the rise of "crowdsourced fatwa culture," where Muslim users solicit religious opinions directly from digital influencers rather than established scholars. This shift reflects not only changing modes of authority but also new patterns of religious consumption shaped by immediacy, personalization, and interactivity. The ethical concern is that such fatwas often lack theological depth, rely on incomplete textual references, and fail to consider the *maqasid al-shariah* (higher objectives of Islamic law), leading to potentially misleading guidance. Furthermore, the study identifies a phenomenon where certain influencers, aware of their precarious religious credibility, strategically collaborate with recognized *ulama* to bolster their authority. These collaborations often take the form of joint live sessions, guest appearances, or public endorsements, highlighting how digital authority is negotiated through both horizontal (peer influencer) and vertical (traditional scholar) networks (Mahy et al., 2022).

The decentralization of religious authority in the digital age is thus a multifaceted phenomenon that cannot be addressed solely through regulatory mechanisms. It requires a comprehensive approach involving digital literacy programs, ethical content creation guidelines, and the development of context-sensitive digital *fiqh* frameworks. The concept of Digital *Fiqh* Governance, introduced later in this article, aims to offer a solution by providing both institutional and individual-level strategies to navigate the ethical complexities of religious authority in the digital era. In conclusion, the contestation and decentralization of religious authority in contemporary Indonesia illustrate the broader socio-religious transformations triggered by digital technology. While this new digital religious landscape offers opportunities for democratizing religious discourse, it also presents significant ethical, epistemological, and theological challenges that require urgent attention from scholars, policymakers, and the broader Muslim community.

### **Digital *Fiqh* Governance as a Moral Filtering Mechanism**

The expansion of digital platforms and the circulation of vast, unregulated content online have raised complex ethical challenges for Muslim communities in Indonesia. This study finds that the emerging concept of Digital *Fiqh* Governance (DFG) functions as a necessary moral filtering mechanism, helping users navigate the ethical uncertainties of digital life while remaining grounded in Islamic values. Unlike traditional approaches based on clear-cut halal-haram dichotomies, the digital sphere often presents moral ambiguity, where the boundaries between permissible and impermissible behaviors become blurred. In this context, DFG provides a flexible yet principled framework that responds to the shifting ethical terrain of digital engagement.

The conceptual foundation of DFG is rooted in the *maqāṣid al-shari‘ah*—the higher objectives of Islamic law—which aim to preserve essential values such as faith (*hifz al-dīn*), intellect (*hifz al-‘aql*), dignity (*hifz al-‘ird*), and social harmony. These objectives are increasingly threatened in online environments where users are exposed to content that may undermine moral and spiritual wellbeing, including pornography, misinformation, hate speech, cyberbullying, and religious extremism. In response, DFG offers a framework that not only guides individual conduct but also informs collective responsibility among users, content creators, and policymakers. Interviews conducted with Islamic scholars, digital ethicists, and social media practitioners reveal that many Muslims experience what can be described as ethical dissonance—a sense of internal conflict when their digital practices diverge from Islamic moral expectations. One respondent reflected on this tension, admitting that algorithm-driven content

recommendations gradually desensitized their ethical awareness, subtly altering their perception of right and wrong over time.

The study identifies three interrelated levels at which Digital *Fiqh* Governance operates: institutional, communal, and individual. At the institutional level, there is increasing demand for religious authorities—such as the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) and the Ministry of Religious Affairs—to develop comprehensive ethical guidelines for digital behavior, grounded in *fiqh* principles. While existing fatwas on digital issues, such as those addressing hoaxes and hate speech, have provided a normative starting point, they are often seen as fragmented, reactive, and insufficiently attuned to the complexities of digital culture. There is a clear need for more systemic approaches to regulate pressing concerns such as online privacy, slander, the ethical use of AI, and the commodification of religious content. At the community level, some progress is being made through grassroots initiatives. Digital *dakwah* collectives, *pesantren*-affiliated online forums, and moderated study groups have begun experimenting with peer-led content curation and ethical review mechanisms that reflect shared Islamic values. While still in the early stages, these efforts demonstrate the potential of community-based models for shaping responsible digital conduct.

At the individual level, the principle of spiritual self-regulation—*al-raqabah al-dhātiyyah*—emerges as essential for ethical navigation in online spaces. Rooted in the Islamic concept of *taqwa*, or God-consciousness, this self-monitoring discipline encourages users to reflect on their digital intentions and practices, to seek moral clarity when facing ambiguous content, and to embody sincerity and restraint in their online interactions. Content analysis further reveals the rise of participatory ethical discourse among ordinary Muslims who actively discuss the permissibility of various digital behaviors. Online debates surrounding the use of platforms like TikTok for religious preaching, for instance, reflect a kind of informal digital *ijtihad*, where users weigh potential benefits and harms using Islamic reasoning. This phenomenon suggests that despite institutional lag, ethical reflection is organically emerging from the ground up, driven by users' desire to align their digital lives with their faith.

In tandem with these developments, the study also notes the growing commercialization of Islamic ethics in digital spaces. Several Indonesian digital startups and applications now market themselves as halal-certified platforms, promoting themselves as morally safe environments free from explicit, violent, or misleading content. While this indicates a positive response to ethical demands, there is also concern that Islamic ethics risk being reduced to branding strategies, commodified as consumer identity rather than upheld as moral conviction. Furthermore, despite general awareness of digital ethics among Muslim users, many acknowledge a gap between their values and their actual behavior. Participants admitted to engaging in practices such as hate commenting, oversharing, and consuming non-Islamic entertainment, highlighting the need for behavioral interventions that go beyond normative instruction. Suggestions include integrating Islamic ethics into digital literacy education, developing gamified learning tools, and incorporating AI filters with *fiqh*-based guidelines to support ethical content consumption.

At the policy level, the study recommends the development of a national framework for Islamic digital ethics in collaboration between state authorities and Islamic institutions. Such a framework would integrate cyber law, media literacy, and religious ethics, offering comprehensive guidance for ethical digital citizenship. However, it is essential that DFG not be perceived as a rigid or authoritarian mechanism. Rather, it should be seen as an evolving, dialogic process—responsive to technological innovation and sociocultural change. As the digital sphere continues to shape religious expression, identity, and morality, the institutionalization of DFG represents a critical step toward maintaining ethical coherence in Muslim digital life. Its relevance lies in its ability to empower users to make informed, spiritually grounded decisions while participating fully in the opportunities and challenges of the digital age.

## Conclusion

This study reveals that the rapid expansion of digital technologies and the pervasive influence of social media have reshaped the moral and ethical landscape of Muslim communities in Indonesia. The key findings suggest that Digital *Fiqh* Governance serves as a crucial framework for reconciling classical

Islamic ethical norms with the behavioral realities of contemporary digital life, particularly in addressing the rise of online narcissism. This phenomenon, marked by self-promotional behavior and curated religiosity, poses significant risks to the spiritual integrity and social cohesion of young Muslim users. While digital platforms have democratized access to religious content, they have simultaneously created complex challenges for authentic identity formation and ethical self-awareness. The study finds that narcissistic behavior in digital spaces often privileges manipulative self-representation over sincerity, humility, and communal responsibility—core values in Islamic ethics. In response, the development of a holistic and responsive model of digital ethics is urgently needed—one that integrates spiritual, social, and technological dimensions. The findings underscore the critical role of Islamic-based digital literacy education, community-based moral reinforcement, and adaptive public policy in cultivating an ethically resilient digital culture.

Despite its contributions, this study is not without limitations. The scope of data was confined to the Indonesian social media context, and the participant pool was predominantly composed of active social media users, digital media experts, and Islamic scholars. While this focus enabled rich contextual insight, it limited the study's capacity to generalize behavioral patterns across broader demographic groups. Furthermore, the qualitative methodology—employing content analysis and in-depth interviews—prioritized depth over breadth, providing valuable interpretive data but lacking in statistical measurement of the prevalence or scale of digital narcissism. Future research should incorporate comprehensive quantitative studies to assess the extent and impact of narcissistic behaviors across varied demographic groups, including a broader age range and socio-economic backgrounds. Longitudinal designs would also be beneficial for tracking behavioral changes over time in response to evolving technologies and regulatory frameworks. Additionally, cross-cultural comparative studies involving Muslim communities in other national contexts could offer valuable insights into how Digital *Fiqh* Governance is interpreted, adapted, and operationalized in culturally specific ways. Sustained interdisciplinary research is therefore essential to inform the development of inclusive and context-sensitive ethical policies that respond to the complex moral challenges of the digital era.

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## Conflict of Interest

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