



Integrating Maqasid al-Shariah, Science, and State Regulation: A Multidisciplinary Framework for Muslim Children's Protection in Digital Environments

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Abstract

Digital technology expansion presents both opportunities and significant risks for children, particularly regarding exposure to inappropriate content and harmful online interactions. Child protection in digital environments demands a comprehensive approach integrating religious, scientific, and policy dimensions. This study develops a multidisciplinary framework through three converging perspectives: *Maqasid al-Shariah* as a normative Islamic foundation, empirical findings from neuroscience and communication science on social media's impact on children's cognitive and psychosocial development, and Indonesian national regulations particularly Permen Komdigi No. 9 of 2026 restricting social media access for children under 16 years. A qualitative design employing integrative literature review and thematic content analysis was adopted. Findings demonstrate that *hifdz al-'aql* (protection of intellect) and *hifdz al-nasl* (protection of progeny) are the most operationally relevant *Maqasid* principles for digital child protection. Scientific evidence consistently confirms negative impacts of excessive screen time on brain development and mental health, while state regulation provides the operational mechanism for enforcement. The integration of Islamic values and scientific evidence substantially strengthens regulatory legitimacy and effectiveness, creating dual normative and empirical foundations for a safe digital ecosystem for Muslim children in Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has had a significant impact on children's lives fundamentally, providing positive impacts on expanding learning opportunities, but also presenting unprecedented risks. According to UNICEF data, approximately 50% of Indonesian children have been exposed to pornographic content on social media, while another 42% report feeling uncomfortable due to their experiences in digital spaces (Kementerian Komunikasi dan Digital Republik Indonesia, 2026). Other data also shows that 48% of Indonesian children have accessed the internet and experienced cyberbullying (Hafid, 2025). Social media which has a fast dynamic flow gives a different impression to individuals (Putri &

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Eliza, 2021) When using it, according to Goodstars in 2025, the intensity of the millennial and genz generations will spend 4-6 hours per day accessing social media. (GoodStats, 2025). A similar trend is seen in Gen Alpha (aged 10–15 years), who are recorded as using social media for 3–4 hours per day, with a primary preference for TikTok ($\pm 40\%$) and YouTube ($\pm 30\%$). (Survey APJII, 2025). This intensity of use shows that children are increasingly vulnerable to exposure to negative content and risky online interactions.

This phenomenon urges the government, families, and communities to develop a comprehensive and multidimensional child protection framework. This protection should not only focus on regulations but also integrate educational, psychological, religious, and public policy dimensions to create a safe, healthy digital ecosystem that supports children's holistic development.

In response, the Indonesian government issued Ministerial Regulation No. 9 of 2026, a derivative of Government Regulation No. 17 of 2025 concerning the Governance of Electronic Systems for Child Protection (PP Tunas). This regulation officially restricts access to social media for children under 16, effective March 28, 2026 (Kementerian Komunikasi dan Digital Republik Indonesia, 2026). This policy is implemented for several platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, X, etc. by requiring the deactivation of children's accounts and the implementation of a stricter age verification system (Indarto, 2026). Although this regulatory step is progressive, it still requires a strong theoretical basis for implementation so that it is in accordance with the values embraced by Indonesian society.

Several studies have also confirmed the negative impact of social media on children's mental health and cognitive development. A study by Chen found that adolescents who use social media for more than three hours per day are at higher risk of experiencing mental health problems, particularly related to self-image (Cheng et al., 2023). Primack also explained something similar, where he linked high levels of social media use to the risk of increasing symptoms of depression and anxiety in teenagers (Primack et al., 2017). Excessive screen time in children under five years of age (Putri, 2023) may experience a decrease in attention span, delays in language development and disturbances in controlling emotions (Swider-Cios et al., 2023). In fact, WHO recommends a maximum screen time limit for children aged 2-5 years of one hour per day with educational and interactive content (Mauluddia & Yulindrasari, 2024). However, most of the studies conducted focus on the scope of psychology and medicine without relating to the perspective of religious values, especially in the context of Muslim society in Indonesia.

Unlike previous research, which generally only addressed the Maqasid al-Shariah, the psychological impact of social media, or child protection regulations separately, this study integrates these three perspectives into a single multidisciplinary framework for protecting Muslim children in the digital environment. Most previous literature tends to separate medical-psychological approaches from theological ones. The limited literature specifically examining the intersection between Maqasid al-Shariah, neuroscientific evidence, and state legal instruments creates a research gap that this study fills. Therefore, this study aims to formulate a new multidisciplinary framework that synthesizes science, positive law, and Islamic knowledge as the foundation for child protection in cyberspace. Given the limited literature on the study of Maqasid al-Shariah, the interrelationship between scientific evidence and state regulations within a single multidisciplinary framework for child protection, this study aims to provide a multidisciplinary framework through science and Islamic knowledge for child protection.

METHODS

The data collection process was carried out systematically through searches of reputable scientific databases (Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar) as well as official legal documents. The inclusion criteria for the literature used were: (1) Peer-reviewed scientific journal articles published in the last 10 years (2016–2026) related to the cognitive impact of screen time and social media on children; (2) Books and journal articles in the sharia/Islamic law cluster that discuss the operationalization of contemporary Maqasid al-Shariah; and (3) Documents of active Indonesian positive legal regulations. Exclusion criteria included non-scientific opinion articles, personal blogs, and literature that had no direct relevance to child protection in the cyber era. Qualitative research allows for a complex understanding of phenomena through the synthesis of various theoretical perspectives (Creswell, 2014). *Library research* enables researchers to analyze, synthesize and integrate literature as a discipline to produce a comprehensive understanding of digital child protection issues (Snyder, 2019). This research utilizes primary and secondary data sources related to policies and scientific publications relevant to the topic. Data collection was conducted using literature documentation methods, followed by content analysis using a thematic approach and narrative synthesis analysis. To ensure the credibility and validity of the analysis, the researcher employed data triangulation, starting with: 1) data source triangulation using various types of data to obtain a comprehensive perspective; 2) theoretical triangulation by integrating theories from various disciplines; and 3) checking by verifying the developed framework. Through this method, the research adopted an integrative framework development approach that synthesizes three main pillars: Maqasid al-Shariah (normative-ethical foundations); scientific evidence (empirical foundations of the impact of screen time and social media); and state regulations (legal-operational mechanisms).

This research adopted an integrative framework development approach that synthesizes three main pillars: 1) Maqasid al-Shariah as a normative foundation that provides a philosophical and ethical perspective for child protection; 2) scientific evidence that provides a foundation for the impact of social media and screen time on child development; and 3) state regulations that provide legal and operational mechanisms for implementation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Maqasid al-Shariah as the Normative Foundation for Digital Child Protection An analysis of the principles of Maqasid al-Shariah explains that child protection in the digital space can be conceptualized through two main pillars, namely; hifdz al-nasl (protection of offspring) and hifdz al-'aql (protection of reason). Masruroh and Mahmutarom stated that Maqasid al-Shariah prioritizes the protection of religion, soul, mind, property, and offspring so that it can address the issue of child sexual exploitation in the digital space (Masruroh & Mahmutarom, 2024). The Maqasid al-Shariah principle reveals that child protection in the digital space can be conceptualized through five main principles operationalized in the contemporary digital context.

Table 1. Operationalization of Maqasid al-Shariah in Child Protection Digital

Maqasid Principle	Classical Definition	Application Digital Context	Implementation Mechanism
<i>Hifdz al-Din</i>	Maintaining religion	Protecting against anti-religious content and values that contradict Islam	Islamic value-based content curation, digital moral education in madrasas
<i>Hifdz al-Nafs</i>	Guarding the soul	Prevent cyber violence, sexual exploitation, and psychological trauma	Platform regulation, harmful content reporting system, counseling services
<i>Hifdz al-'Aql</i>	Keep your wits about you	Protect cognitive development from excessive exposure and non-educational content.	Screen time limits, curating educational content, co-viewing with parents
<i>Hifdz al-Nasl</i>	Protecting offspring	Protection of moral, spiritual and identity of Muslim generation	Islamic digital parenting, value-based digital literacy, family mentoring
<i>Hifdz al-Mal</i>	Guarding property	Prevent online fraud, financial exploitation of children	Digital transaction security education, e-commerce platform verification

Source (Masruroh & Mahmutarom, 2024)

Damayanti's study on protecting children from cyber violence in Indonesia and Malaysia shows that the principles of *maṣlaḥah* (benefit) and *sadd al-dharā'i* (prevention of harm) of Maqasid al-Shariah can be operationalized as a normative foundation for the design of systemic risk-based regulations (Damayanti et al., 2026). The study proposes a model of *ius constituendum* that integrates international child rights standards (CRC General Comment No. 25) with Islamic ethical principles, emphasizing justice (*ʿadl*) through equitable service standards, including for children in remote and disadvantaged areas. It demonstrates that Maqasid al-Shariah serves not only as a theological justification, but also as an operational framework that can be translated into inclusive and responsive public policies.

The digital era has exposed Indonesian children to a variety of risks that require serious attention from various stakeholders. Recent data demonstrates the high urgency of developing a comprehensive protection framework.

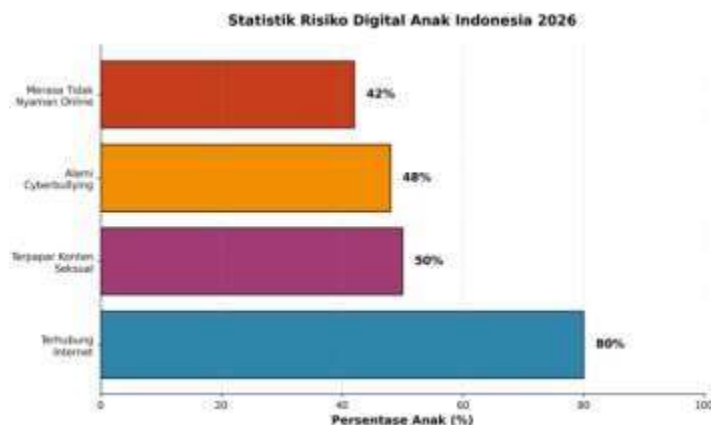


Fig 1. Statistik resiko

Based on the image above, it can be seen that almost 80% of Indonesian children are connected to the internet, 50% are exposed to sexual content, 48% experience cyberbullying, and 42% feel uncomfortable or afraid due to their experiences in the digital space (Kementerian Komunikasi dan Digital Republik Indonesia, 2026). These statistics underscore the need for multidimensional interventions that are not only regulatory, but also educational and preventive based on religious and cultural values.

According to neuroscience findings, excessive social media exposure can impact the structure and function of children's still-developing brains. Another study found that children aged 9-10 spent more than three hours per day in front of screens, leading to thinning of the prefrontal cortex, the brain region that regulates emotions (Cheng et al., 2023). This is in line with Madigan's study, which, through a meta-analysis of 87 studies, concluded that there is a bidirectional relationship between screen time and delayed language development in early childhood (Madwe et al., 2025). This is in line with the theory of social media use and adolescent well-being, which explains that the impact of social media is heterogeneous and depends on the individual characteristics of children, usage patterns, and the quality of online interactions (Valkenburg et al., 2022). In response to this, Indonesia has built a progressive regulatory ecosystem for child protection in the digital space.

Table 3. Map of Digital Child Protection Regulations in Indonesia and its Correlation with Maqasid al-Shariah

Regulations	Coverage	Mechanism	Relevance to Maqasid
UU No. 35/2014 concerning Child Protection	Protection of children from exploitation, violence and discrimination	Criminal sanctions; reporting obligations; formation of KPAI	Hifdz al-Nafs & Hifdz al-Nasl
UU No. 19/2016 tentang ITE	Electronic content regulation; cybercrimes against children	Content takedown; site blocking; sanctions for those who distribute illegal content	Hifdz al-'Aql & Hifdz al-Din
PP No. 17/2025 tentang PP Tunas	Electronic system governance in child protection	Platform standards; child data protection; age verification	All the principles of Maqasid
Permen Komdigi No. 9/2026	Restrictions on social media access for children under 16 years old	Account deactivation; strict age verification; platform obligations	Hifdz al-'Aql & Hifdz al-Nasl
UN CRC General Comment No. 25 (2021)	Children's rights in the international digital environment	International standards on children's digital rights; state obligations	Hifdz al-Nafs & Hifdz al-Mal

Source: Developed from various regulations (2014–2026)

Komdigi Ministerial Regulation No. 9 of 2026 represents a significant milestone in the history of digital child protection in Indonesia. This regulation requires major social media platforms—TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, X, and Facebook—to deactivate the accounts of users identified as under 16 and implement an age verification system based on population data (NIK). Indiarito (2026) analyzed that the successful implementation of this regulation depends on three critical factors: (1) the technical capacity of the platform to carry out accurate age verification; (2) the availability of integrated population data infrastructure; and (3)

parental awareness and active participation in digital supervision (Indarto, 2026).

From a comparative perspective, this Indonesian regulation shares similarities with similar policies in Australia (Online Safety Act 2021), the United Kingdom (Online Safety Act 2023), and France (Loi visant à instaurer une majorité numérique, 2023). However, the uniqueness of the Indonesian context lies in its predominantly Muslim population, which requires the integration of Islamic values in policy implementation. This gap makes the Maqasid al-Shariah framework highly relevant as a normative complement to existing regulations.

CONCLUSION

This research has successfully developed a multidisciplinary framework for Muslim child protection in the digital environment that integrates three complementary pillars: Maqasid al-Shariah, scientific evidence, and state regulations. Several main conclusions can be formulated as follows: 1) the principles of Maqasid al-Shariah—especially *hifdz al-'aql* and *hifdz al-nasl*—have high relevance and can be operationalized contextually to respond to child protection challenges in the digital era; 2) evidence from neuroscience and communication psychology consistently confirms the negative impact of unregulated social media use on children's cognitive development, mental health, and identity formation; 3) Komdigi Ministerial Regulation No. 9 of 2026 represents a progressive step that needs to be strengthened with a normative foundation based on Maqasid al-Shariah to gain broader legitimacy in Indonesian Muslim society. This research has limitations in its purely conceptual-theoretical nature based on literature review (library research), so it has not tested the empirical effectiveness of the implementation of Komdigi Ministerial Regulation No. 9 of 2026 in the field. Furthermore, sociological analysis of community technical resistance and digital infrastructure readiness in remote areas has not been explored in depth. Future researchers are advised to conduct quantitative empirical studies or post-implementation policy evaluations to measure technology platform compliance and the effectiveness of these age restrictions in practice.

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