

Reconstructing Boundaries of Spousal Interaction with the Opposite Sex in the Digital Era: A Sadd Al-Dzari'ah Approach in Islamic Family Law

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Abstract

The high divorce rate in Indonesia, which reached 516,334 cases in 2022, shows the increasingly vulnerable resilience of Muslim families. Previous studies have generally explained divorce from social, economic, and psychological perspectives, while studies that have formulated preventive limits on the interaction of husband and wife with the opposite sex based on Islamic legal principles, especially in physical, digital, and professional spaces, are still very limited. This study aims to formulate preventive limits on the interaction of husband and wife with the opposite sex based on the concept of sadd adz-dzari'ah in the perspective of Islamic Family Law and analyze its normative capacity as a basis for strengthening Muslim family governance in the modern era. This research uses a normative legal research method based on literature studies with a conceptual approach and maqāṣid al-syarī'ah. The data was analyzed qualitatively through the study of the Qur'an, hadith, classical literature of uṣūl fiqh, and contemporary scientific publications. The results of the study show that sadd adz-dzari'ah has a strong and proportionate normative capacity because it only limits interactions that objectively have a high potential to lead to acts that are prohibited by the Shari'ah. This research produced a Preventive Model of Three Spaces of Interaction that includes the boundaries of physical, digital, and professional interactions, accompanied by measurable indicators of the shift in interaction from the category of mubāḥ to dzari'ah as well as a multi-level normative classification that includes mubāḥ, makrūh, and ḥarām. These findings expand the scope of the study of fiqh mu'āsyarah into the digital space as a theoretical contribution that has not been widely discussed in the literature before. This study recommends that the model be integrated into the curriculum of marriage guidance, family education, and Muslim family development policies as preventive instruments to strengthen family resilience in the digital age.

Keywords: Family Resilience; Cross-Gender Interactions; Digital Space; Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah; Family Governance; Divorce Prevention.

Abstrak

Tingginya angka perceraian di Indonesia yang mencapai 516.334 kasus pada tahun 2022 menunjukkan semakin rentannya ketahanan keluarga Muslim. Kajian terdahulu umumnya menjelaskan perceraian dari perspektif sosial, ekonomi, dan psikologis, sementara kajian yang merumuskan batasan preventif interaksi suami istri dengan lawan jenis berdasarkan prinsip hukum Islam, khususnya dalam ruang fisik, digital, dan profesional, masih sangat terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan merumuskan batasan preventif interaksi suami istri dengan lawan jenis berdasarkan konsep *sadd adz-dzari'ah* dalam perspektif Hukum Keluarga Islam serta



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menganalisis kapasitas normatifnya sebagai landasan penguatan tata kelola keluarga Muslim di era modern. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian hukum normatif berbasis studi kepustakaan dengan pendekatan konseptual dan *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*. Data dianalisis secara kualitatif melalui penelaahan terhadap Al-Qur'an, hadis, literatur klasik uṣūl fiqh, serta publikasi ilmiah kontemporer. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *sadd adz-dzarī'ah* memiliki kapasitas normatif yang kuat dan proporsional karena hanya membatasi interaksi yang secara objektif berpotensi tinggi mengarah pada perbuatan yang dilarang syariat. Penelitian ini menghasilkan Model Preventif Tiga Ruang Interaksi yang mencakup batasan interaksi fisik, digital, dan profesional, disertai indikator terukur mengenai pergeseran interaksi dari kategori *mubāḥ* menuju *dzarī'ah* serta klasifikasi normatif bertingkat yang meliputi *mubāḥ*, *makrūh*, dan *ḥarām*. Temuan ini memperluas cakupan kajian *fiqh mu'āsyarah* ke ruang digital sebagai kontribusi teoretis yang belum banyak dibahas dalam literatur sebelumnya. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan agar model tersebut diintegrasikan ke dalam kurikulum bimbingan perkawinan, pendidikan keluarga, dan kebijakan pembinaan keluarga Muslim sebagai instrumen preventif untuk memperkuat ketahanan keluarga di era digital.

Kata Kunci: Ketahanan Keluarga; Interaksi Lintas Gender; Ruang Digital; *Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah*; Tata Kelola Keluarga; Pencegahan Perceraian.

INTRODUCTION

The high divorce rate in Indonesia in recent years is a crucial signal of the fragility of the foundation of Muslim household resilience in the modern era. Based on data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in Statistics Indonesia 2023, the number of divorce cases in Indonesia in 2022 has reached a very significant number, namely 516,334 cases. This phenomenon not only places this figure as the highest in the last six years, but also reflects the dysfunction of the normative and preventive dimensions in family institutions. Various literature studies have identified that the escalation of marital conflict that leads to divorce lawsuits is generally triggered by economic factors, communication barriers, relationship inequality, and the presence of third parties or infidelity. This empirical reality emphasizes the need for a study of Islamic family law that no longer merely describes the sociological phenomenon, but is able to offer the formulation of legal solutions that are preventive, systematic, and applicative.

One of the factors that often triggers the initial rift of a household is the interaction between a husband or wife and the opposite sex outside of the marriage bond.¹ Interactions that are initially natural and professional can develop into emotional closeness if they are not accompanied by clear boundaries. The results of the study showed that the factors behind the involvement of infidelity in the household included lack of time for family, age differences, lack of communication, the influence of social media, the rise of reunions, the existence of opportunities, and low morals.² Of these factors, social interaction that transcends boundaries occupies a very significant position because it is gradual and often unconscious, starting from a reasonable introduction, progressing to a high intensity of communication, then leading to an emotional closeness that eats away at the foundation of marriage from within. This gradual pattern will be analyzed in this study through *the framework of adz-dzari'ah sadd* as a systematic prevention mechanism.

¹ Fakhr Sadat Ghoreishi Rad and Fariba Poorjabbar Akhuni, "Relationship between Religious Commitment and Other Factors Related to Tendency toward Extra-Marital Affairs among Married Students," *Health, Spirituality and Medical Ethics* 5, no. 2 (2018): 45–50,

² Agus Nugraha, Amiruddin Barinong, and Zainuddin, "Factors Causing Domestic Divorce Due to Infidelity," *Kalabbirang Law Journal* 2, no. 1 (2020): 58.

The development of information technology has created a new dimension that exacerbates this problem. Platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram, Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook are now spaces for intensive interaction, easy to access, and take place without time or distance.³ Research on the influence of social media on domestic harmony shows that digital platforms pose real risks in the form of jealousy, suspicion, and conflict due to interactions with individuals outside of marital relationships.⁴ On the other hand, social media is also a means that facilitates infidelity because of its easy access and its users come from various circles, so that the elements of defamation, career damage, and reputation become real conflicts between couples.⁵ These two contexts are social media and the work environment that are the main focus of this research in formulating preventive interaction limits, because both are real spaces where problematic interactions most often begin and develop.

In the treasures of *ushul fiqh*, scholars have formulated a preventive methodology of Islamic law, and the most relevant to this issue is the concept of *sadd adz-dzari'ah*. Conceptually, *sadd adz-dzari'ah* is a method of closing (*sadd*) all roads or intermediaries (*dzari'ah*) that have the potential to lead to damage (*mafsadah*), even though the initial act is basically permissible.⁶ Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah in *I'lam al-Muwaqqi'in* and Ibn Taymiyyah in *Majmoo' al-Fatawa* emphasized that closing the path to destruction is an obligation in maintaining the goals of sharia (*maqasid al-shari'ah*), especially the protection of one's offspring and honor (*hifzh al-nasl wa al-'irdh*). The scholars divide *dzari'ah* into several classifications based on the degree of likelihood of *mafsadah* from the definite (*qath'i*), the dominant (*ghalib*), to the rare (*nadir*) so that not all interactions with the opposite sex are automatically prohibited, but only those that meet the criteria of high-risk *dzari'ah*. This conceptual framework will be fully operationalized in the results and discussion of this research.

The application of the principle of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* in the study of contemporary Islamic family law has actually been explored by previous researchers, such as in the analysis of divorce decisions due to sexual deviance,⁷ the basis for preventing family radicalism,⁸ and as a conceptual preventive norm of family law.⁹ However, the majority of these studies still dwell on the theoretical-macro level or focus on classic issues such as polygamy and physical divorce through the prohibition of conventional *khalwat*.¹⁰ In

³ Ghania Mehmood, Noor Alam, and Samreen Afzal, "Social Media Usage Interpersonal Relationship and Mental Health Issues among Married Individuals," *Journal of Political Stability Archive* 3, no. 1 (2025)

⁴ Noor Maulina et al., "The Dynamics of Social Media's Influence on Household Harmony in a Family Law Perspective," *SIBATIK Journal* 4, no. 7 (2025): 3.

⁵ M. Suheri and Irwan, "Viralizing Cases of Domestic Infidelity on TikTok Social Media in the Perspective of Islamic Law," *JRTI (Indonesian Action Research Journal)* 8, no. 3 (2023): 295.

⁶ Ramadani Siregar, "Saddu Al-Dzari'ah's Approach in Islamic Studies," *Lanter Journal: Religious, Scientific and Technological Studies* 22, no. 1 (2023): 46.

⁷ Meriska Adelia Tifani et al., "Bisexuality as a Reason for Divorce From the Perspective of Sadd Adz-Dzari'ah," *Islamic Family Law Research Journal* 5, no. 2 (2025): 1.

⁸ Riki Hidayat, Kasuwi Saiban, and Tutik Hamidah, "Family as a Prevention of Radicalism in Discrimination of Religious Rights from the Perspective of Sadd Dzari'ah and Islam Nusantara," *An-Nisa: Journal of Islamic Family Law* 2, no. 1 (2025): 15.

⁹ Muhammad Zainuddin Sunarto and Ahmad Idhafi, "Sad Al-Dzara'i As a Preventive Norm in Family Law: A Conceptual Analysis and Practical Application," *QONUN: Journal of Islamic Law and Legislation* 10, no. 1 (2026): 100.

¹⁰ Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, Fath al-Bari Syarh Saheeh al-Bukhari, Juz IX (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 1379 AH), 334

the modern era, reality shows that household rifts often start from cyber-infidelity, namely gender-intensive private digital interactions and social interactions in the work environment that are slowly shifting from mubah status to dzari'ah.¹¹ Previous studies of Islamic family law have so far been dominated by sociological-empirical approaches, while the formulation of explicit normative-operational boundaries to respond to the dynamics of virtual interaction has not been widely explored. This gap demonstrates the need for studies that specifically integrate normative perspectives with the realities of digital interaction in the context of contemporary Islamic family law.¹²

Table 1. Differences Previous Research

Peneliti	Focus	Findings	Gap
Tifani	Divorce	Sadd adz-dzari'ah	Not discussing digital interactions
São Paulo	Radicalism	Family preventive	Not discussing household

Table 1 shows that previous research has made important contributions in explaining various aspects of the application of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* in Islamic law. The research by Tifani focuses on the issue of divorce and confirms the relevance of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* as a preventive instrument, but has not examined the limits of marital interaction with the opposite sex in the digital space. Meanwhile, Hidayat's research places *sadd adz-dzari'ah* as an approach to preventing radicalism in the context of the family, but has not yet addressed the formulation of the limits of cross-gender interaction in domestic life. Thus, the two studies still focus on sectoral issues and have not developed a normative framework that comprehensively regulates the interaction of husband and wife with the opposite sex in various contemporary living spaces.

Departing from this gap, this research offers a novelty that is conceptually and operationally different from previous studies. If previous studies tended to separate physical interactions and the dynamics of digital life, this study integrates the two together with the professional dimension through the Three-Space Preventive Model. This model formulates preventive limits for the interaction of husband and wife with the opposite sex in an integrated manner in three main spaces, namely the physical space (face-to-face), the digital space (social media and online communication), and the professional space (work environment). The novelty of the research lies not only in the expansion of the object of study into the digital space, but also in the preparation of six operational indicators that are able to identify the shift in interaction from the category of *mubāḥ* to *dzari'ah*, accompanied by a stratified normative classification into the categories of *mubāḥ*, *makrūh*, and *ḥarām*. Thus, this research does not only reactualize the classic concept of *sadd adz-dzari'ah*, but reconstructs it into a normative model that is applicable and adaptive to the dynamics of Muslim families in the digital era.

Based on all the above descriptions, this study establishes two main problem formulations: first, how the concept of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* in Islamic law as a normative

¹¹ Amelda Az Zahraa et al., "Challenges and Opportunities in the Digital Age for Islamic Family Law Advocacy," *Journal of Scientific Research and Review* 2, no. 7 (2023): 1153.

¹² Ita Musarrofa, Husnul Muttaqin, dan Ridha Amaliyah, "The Problems of Islamic Family Law in the Digital Era and Its Relevance to Renewal of the Compilation of Islamic Law," *Jurnal Hukum Islam* 22, no. 1 (2024): 92.

basis in regulating the interaction of husband and wife with the opposite sex; and second, how to formulate the limits of the interaction between husband and wife with the opposite sex that are preventive based on *the sadd adz-dzari'ah* approach in the context of modern social life. To answer these two formulations of the problem, this study will sequentially present the basic concept and classification of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* as the basis of the theory, followed by an analysis of the dynamics of husband-wife interaction in the modern era as a context of reality. Furthermore, the application of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* to the three dimensions of interaction, namely physical, digital, and professional, was also explained in order to formulate operational limitations that include indicators of legal change from *mubah* to *dzari'ah*, as well as their classification into three legal categories. As a culmination, this study introduces the *Three-Space Preventive Model* as an original conceptual contribution that exists to fill the gap in the Islamic family law literature.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is normative legal research based on library research, which is research that examines law as norms, principles, and principles written in authoritative legal sources without collecting data in the field.¹³ The approach used is a conceptual approach, which is to analyze the concept of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* in depth through the study of Islamic legal literature, then operationalize it in the context of the reality of modern social interaction.¹⁴ This approach was chosen because the research aims not only to describe existing concepts, but also to produce new normative formulations in the form of a three-space preventive model that is operational and contextual as a scientific contribution (novelty).

The sources of legal materials in this study are classified into three categories. First, primary legal materials include the Qur'an, the hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) related to the interaction of the opposite sex, as well as classic books of *ushul fiqh* such as *I'lam al-Muwaqqi'in* by Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah, *Majmu' al-Fatawa* by Ibn Taymiyyah, *Al-Fiqh al-Islami wa Adillatuhu* by Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, and *Syarh An-Nawawi Ala Al-Muslim*. Second, secondary legal materials in the form of scientific journals of Islamic family law published in 2020–2026 regarding *sadd adz-dzari'ah*, divorce studies, the influence of social media on households, and communication psychology literature. Third, tertiary legal materials used as support include the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language (KBBI), a dictionary of legal terms, and the Islamic Encyclopedia to provide additional explanations of the legal terms used.

The data collection technique is carried out through documentation studies by systematically inventorying and studying primary, secondary, and tertiary legal materials through digital databases such as Google Scholar, SINTA, and university journal portals. Furthermore, data analysis was carried out using qualitative-descriptive-analytical content analysis.¹⁵ This analysis process is carried out through three structured stages: (1) describing the concept of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* along with its legal basis, classification, and preventive objectives; (2) analyze the form of interaction between husband and wife with the opposite sex in the modern era which is included in the *dzari'ah* category based on the criteria of scholars; and (3) formulate operational interaction limits in three dimensions

¹³ Soerjono Soekanto and Sri Mamudji, *Normative Law Research: A Brief Review* (Jakarta: Rajawali Pers, 2015), 13.

¹⁴ Peter Mahmud Marzuki, *Legal Research, Revised Edition* (Jakarta: Kencana Prenada Media Group, 2019), 47.

¹⁵ Intan Arafah, "The Sadd Adz-Dzari'ah Approach in Islamic Studies," *Al-Muamalat: Journal of Sharia Law and Economics* 5, no. 1 (2020): 68.

(physical, digital, and work environment) as the main normative contribution of this research.

The validity of the data in this study was carried out through triangulation of sources in three stages. *First*, at the level of thought generation, the views of classical scholars (Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah, Ibn Taymiyyah, An-Nawawi) are juxtaposed with the views of contemporary scholars (Wahbah Az-Zuhaili) to maintain the consistency of the meaning of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* when applied to digital issues. *Second*, at the level of the type of legal material, primary data (Qur'an, hadith, *classic ushul fiqh* books), secondary (journal 2020-2026), and tertiary (dictionaries and legal encyclopedias) are compared so that there is no source bias. *Third*, at the disciplinary level, sociological-empirical findings on digital interaction and infidelity are confirmed with the normative framework of *ushul fiqh*, so that the results of the research remain based on reality as well as the authority of Islamic law. These three triangulation steps are the basis for strengthening the normative credibility of the research findings.

As a complement to triangulation, this study *cross-checked* classical-contemporary literature to verify the consistency of the meaning of key concepts such as *dzari'ah*, by tracing its definition in the classical book of *ushul fiqh* (Ibn Qayyim, Ibn Taymiyyah) and then comparing it with contemporary interpretations (Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, journal 2020-2026). This step ensures that the application of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* in digital and professional contexts remains grounded in its methodological roots without distortion of meaning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Basic Concept of Sadd Adz-Dzari'ah as a Theoretical Foundation

Sadd adz-dzari'ah is one of the methods of legal *istinbath* in *ushul fiqh* which has great significance in the Islamic legal system. Etymologically, this term is composed of two words: *sadd* which means to close or clog, and *al-dzari'ah* which means means, way, or intermediary to something. Technically, *dzari'ah* can be understood as a means or medium that leads to a certain goal; if the means lead to something that is forbidden, then it is also prohibited, while if it leads to what is permissible, then the law becomes permissible.¹⁶ Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah in *I'lam al-Muwaqqi'in* defines *al-dzari'ah* as everything that can be a medium and a path (*wasilah*) to something else, both material and meaningful.¹⁷ Starting from this definition, the main function of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* in the Islamic legal system is to be anticipatory: it works by closing every path that has the potential to lead a person to a forbidden act, even before it actually occurs.¹⁸ Thus, *sadd adz-dzari'ah* is not just a prohibition against an act, but a preventive prohibition against everything that has the potential to be an entrance to damage, even though the original act is basically permissible. The relevance of this definition to the problem of husband-wife interaction with the opposite sex will be fully operationalized in the following sections.

In order to find a normative footing for the concept of *sadd adz-dzari'ah*, scholars refer to various verses of the Qur'an and the words of the Prophet (*peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*). One of the evidences that is often used as a reference by scholars is the words of Allah *Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala* which reads

¹⁶ Tjut Intan, "Saddudz Dzari'ah and Its Problems (A Study of Ushul Fiqh)," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* (2022): 2.

¹⁷ Ibnu Qayyim al-Jauziyah, *I'lam al-Muwaqqi'in 'an Rabb al-'Alamin*, Juz III, 14.

¹⁸ Intan Arafah, "The Sadd Adz-Dzari'ah Approach in Islamic Studies," 70.

وَلَا تَسُبُّوا الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَيَسُبُّوا اللَّهَ عَدْوًا بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ كَذَلِكَ زَيْنًا
لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ عَمَلُهُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

"Do not curse (worship) that they worship other than Allah, for they will curse Allah by going beyond the limits without knowledge. Thus, We have made every ummah to consider their work well. Then to their Lord shall they return, and He will tell them what they have done."¹⁹

This verse explicitly prohibits Muslims from throwing insults at objects worshipped by polytheists. This prohibition is not because the act itself is reprehensible in origin, but because it has the potential to trigger a backlash in the form of excessive and uncontrollable insults of polytheists to Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'ala*. It is through the logic of this verse, especially the Malikiyah and Hanabilah scholars build an argument that *sadd adz-dzari'ah* is worthy of being used as a method of determining the law, namely that an act that is legally permissible can change its status to be prohibited if it is proven to open a gap to *more serious harm*.²⁰ As for the hadith, the Prophet (*peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) said:

إِنَّ الْحَلَالَ بَيِّنٌ وَإِنَّ الْحَرَامَ بَيِّنٌ، وَبَيْنَهُمَا مُشْتَبِهَاتٌ

"Indeed, what is lawful is clear and what is unlawful is clear, and between the two there are things that are vague (*musytabihat*)" (HR. Bukhari-Muslim).²¹

This hadith substantially emphasizes that *the area of syubhat*, namely things whose status is not clear or haram, is a zone that must be avoided as an anticipatory step before someone falls into the actual haram. Imam An-Nawawi in *Syarh An-Nawawi Ala Al-Muslim* explained that whoever guards himself from the matter of *syubhat* means that he has preserved his religion and honor, while whoever falls into *the shabhat* is feared to fall into the forbidden just like a herdsman who herds his cattle on the edge of the forbidden land, which will gradually enter the forbidden area.²² In line with this principle, Ibn Taymiyyah in *Majmoo' al-Fataawa* emphasizes that avoiding *syubhat* does not stand alone, but is an integral part of the obligation to maintain *maqasid al-shari'ah*, because leaving the doors that lead to destruction open is tantamount to ignoring the main objectives of the Shari'ah itself.²³ Kawakib and Hafidz Shuhud point out that the concept of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* as an argument in Islamic law is generally accepted by scholars, with the source of legitimacy coming from the Qur'an, hadith, *ijma'*, and *qiyas*.²⁴

In formulating the concept of *sadd adz-dzari'ah*, Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah did not establish it uniformly for all circumstances, but rather established a classification

¹⁹ QS. Al-An'am [06]: 108.

²⁰ Kawakib K., Hafidz Syuhud, and Yusuf Y., "Sadd Al-Dzari'ah as Islamic Law: A Comparative Study of Ibn Al-Qayyim Al-Jauziyah and Ibn Hazm," *Al-Bayan: Journal of the Science of the Qur'an and Hadith* 4, no. 1 (2021): 83.

²¹ Abu Abdillah An-Nu'man bin Bashir, hadith narrated by Imam Al-Bukhari, *Saheeh Al-Bukhari*, Kitab Al-Buyu' no. 2051 and Imam Muslim, *Saheeh Muslim*, Kitab Al-Musaqah no. 1599.

²² Abu Zakariya Muhyiddin Yahya bin Syaraf An-Nawawi, *Syarh An-Nawawi Ala Al-Muslim*, Juz XI (Beirut: Dar Ihya At-Turats Al-Arabi, t.t.), 27.

²³ Ibnu Taimiyyah, *Majmu' al-Fatawa*, juz 20 (Madinah: Mujamma' al-Malik Fahd li Thiba'at al-Mushaf al-Syarif, t.t.), 48.

²⁴ Kawakib K. dan Hafidz Syuhud, "Implementation of the Concept of Sadd Al-Dzari'ah in Islamic Law (Perspective of Ibn Al-Qayyim Al-Jauziyah and Ibn Hazm)," *International Journal of Philosophy* 9, no. 4 (2021): 195.

framework that distinguishes the level of danger of an intermediary by the degree of its potential damage. He divided *al-dzari'ah* into four categories. The first category includes everything that has already contained elements of damage since its inception and does not have a significant benefit dimension. The second category includes actions that are originally neutral or *mubah*, but are consciously directed by the perpetrator to achieve a destructive goal. The third category is deeds that are *mubah* and are not intended for damage, but empirically the tendency is more to lead to *mafsadat* than to *maslahat*. The fourth category is deeds that are *mubah*, not intended for damage, and only have a small potential to lead to *mafsadat*, while the value of *benefits* is much more dominant. From this framework, Ibn Qayyim emphasized that the first three categories can be used as a legal basis in the application of *sadd adz-dzari'ah*, because the potential for damage is real and significant. Meanwhile, the fourth category cannot be used as a basis for prohibition, because imposing *sadd adz-dzari'ah* in this condition will actually ignore the *greater benefits* and be counterproductive to the main purpose of the sharia itself.²⁵

The classification has a strong methodological foundation, but it is formulated in the context of physical interaction that assumes the intention of the perpetrator can be empirically verified. This assumption is difficult to fulfill in digital communications that are private and cannot be observed by third parties. This gap is the methodological justification for the six operational indicators developed in this study in the next section. In more detail, Imam Al-Qarafi and as-Syatibi divide *dzari'ah* according to the degree of possibility of *mafsadah*: first, *definite dzari'ah (qath'i)* leads to destruction; second, *infrequent dzari'ah (nadir)* leads to destruction; and third, *abundant or frequent dzari'ah (ghalib)* leads to damage, which is the main focus of the implementation of *SADD adz-dzari'ah*.²⁶ In determining the law, *sadd adz-dzari'ah* has three main elements that need to be considered: the desired purpose or intention, the intention or motive seen in terms of the object, and the consequences caused by the act.²⁷ The classification framework shows that *sadd adz-dzari'ah* is actually not a legally restrictive instrument without limits, but a mechanism that works in a measured and proportionate manner, namely only closing gaps that are manifestly or dominantly having the potential to lead to damage. This principle of proportionality is then the main foothold in building the analysis in the next discussion.

The most important dimension of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* is its preventive character (*wiqai*), which is to protect humans from damage before the damage actually occurs. This approach is in line with the general principle in Islamic law that preventing harm (*dar'u al-mafasid*) takes precedence over bringing benefits (*jalbu al-mashalih*). Through this method, human efforts are protected and maintained from falling into damage (*mafsadah*) by closing and blocking all means, tools, and wills that will be used to perform an act.²⁸ Ibn Taymiyyah in *Majmoo' al-Fataawa* emphasized that Islamic law was revealed to realize *benefits* and prevent damage.²⁹ Therefore, the principle of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* is an important part of maintaining the goals of sharia (*maqāṣid al-shari'ah*) through preventive efforts by closing all means that have the potential to lead humans to

²⁵ Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *I'lam al-Muwaqqi'in* quoted in Kawakib K., Shuhud, and Yusuf, "Sadd al-Dzari'ah as Islamic Law," 85.

²⁶ Intan Arafah, "The Sadd Adz-Dzari'ah Approach in Islamic Studies," 74.

²⁷ Intan Arafah, "The Sadd Adz-Dzari'ah Approach in Islamic Studies," 75.

²⁸ Muhamad Takhim, "Saddu Al-Dzari'ah in Islamic Muama," *ACCESS: Journal of Economics and Business* 14, no. 1 (2020): 19.

²⁹ Ibnu Taimiyyah, *Majmu' al-Fataawa*, 48.

mafsadah, so that the protection of religion, soul, intellect, descendants, and property can be optimally maintained. In particular, the protection of posterity and honor, maintaining the continuity and sanctity of the marriage bond is an obligation that must be pursued through early prevention of everything that has the potential to damage it. The implementation of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* can be found in various fields, ranging from worship, muamalah, to modern family social problems.³⁰

The question that then arises is the extent to which the concept of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* is relevant to be applied in today's social life problems, especially in the context of the dynamics of Muslim households in the digital era. Within the framework of *the theory of sadd adz-dzari'ah*, this concept is concerned with the attempt to block or prevent paths that can lead to damage or evil, either explicitly or implicitly, so that its relevance goes beyond the context of classical texts and reaches contemporary issues.³¹ The application of *the principle of sadd adz-dzari'ah* in family matters has been proven to provide a flexible legal basis in dealing with contemporary phenomena, as seen in various decisions of the Religious Court that use it as an analytical framework to assess acts that are not formally prohibited but substantially open up space for the occurrence of *mafsadah*.³² The principle of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* has also been reflected in the preventive study of contemporary Islamic family law as a strong conceptual basis.³³ This relevance is the main methodological justification for this research in using *sadd adz-dzari'ah* as a normative framework to formulate the limits of husband-wife interaction with the opposite sex in the digital era and modern work environment.

The Dynamics of Husband and Wife Interaction in the Modern Context

Contemporary Muslim household life is facing a fundamental transformation due to the entry of digital technology into almost all social life spaces. The development of digital technology has brought significant changes in the dynamics of husband-wife relationships, thus demanding a rearrangement of family relations in accordance with sharia values.³⁴ If in the classical *munakahat fiqh* tradition the rights and obligations of husband and wife are formulated in the context of interaction limited to physical space and local communities, then now both operate in a digital ecosystem that allows connectivity without geographical boundaries, time, and privacy. Social media has transformed into *a new habitus* that actively shapes values, aspirations, and behaviors, as well as a stage where religious and family identities are staged and negotiated.³⁵ Along with that, the modern work environment has also changed into an increasingly open and intense interaction space between men and women, as the demands for professional collaboration increase. This change ultimately presents two main interaction spaces,

³⁰ Intan Arafah, "The Sadd Adz-Dzari'ah Approach in Islamic Studies," 80.

³¹ Muhammad Zainuddin Sunarto dan Ahmad Idhafi, "Sad Al-Dzari'i As a Preventive Norm in Family Law: A Conceptual Analysis and Practical Application," 103.

³² Meriska Adelia Tifani et al., "Bisexuality as a Reason for Divorce From the Perspective of Sadd Adz-Dzari'ah," 4.

³³ Ibn Alfian Khoiri Akhmadi, "A Preventive Analysis of the Practice of Polygamy Without the Consent of the First Wife: A Study Through the Sadd al-Dzari'ah Approach," *Proceedings of Islamic Family Law* (2025): 120.

³⁴ Mustafa Kamal, "Islamic Family Law in Managing Husband and Wife Relations in the Age of Technology," *Ameena Journal* 1, no. 1 (2023): 130.

³⁵ Wahyudi, Oyo Sunaryo Mukhlas, and Beni Ahmad Saebani, "Islamic Family Law in the Midst of the Current of Globalization: The Impact of Social Media on Muslim Marriage Patterns and Family Relations," *Unikom Law Journal* 7, no. 2 (2025): 120.

namely digital and professional, which will be the focus of the *sadd adz-dzari'ah* analysis in the next part of this study.

Social media such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and similar platforms have become the most dominant interaction arena in the social lives of married couples today. The intensive use of social media contributes to the decline in the quality of face-to-face communication, increased jealousy, online infidelity, privacy conflicts, and tensions in the division of gender roles in households.³⁶ Furthermore, interaction with the opposite sex through private messages on social media platforms can cause negative prejudice and distrust between couples, because social media often displays other people's lives that seem more perfect so that they trigger dissatisfaction with their own household conditions.³⁷ The phenomenon that then emerged is *cyber-infidelity* or digital infidelity, which is online emotional involvement with other people outside of the main partner that is carried out in secret, which has consistently been proven to disrupt household stability.³⁸ Intense digital communication can facilitate emotional closeness that leads to romantic involvement even without initial intention, as *emotional micro-cheating* is often overlooked because it is wrapped up in the context of platonic-looking closeness.³⁹ This reality is the empirical justification for the urgency of formulating the limits of *digital khalwat* within the framework of *sadd adz-dzari'ah*.

The fundamental problem that arises from all the above dynamics is the occurrence of *normative ambiguity*, the blurring of the boundary between permissible and unpermissible interactions in marital and conjugal relationships with the opposite sex. The work environment creates conditions that structurally bring together the opposite sex in high intensity and for a long duration every day; Male and female interactions in the work environment that go beyond professional needs have the potential to result in infidelity due to uncontrolled intensity of interaction.⁴⁰ Research confirms that the main causes of divorce in Indonesia include poor communication factors and the presence of third parties or infidelity, both of which are causally linked to the pattern of interaction between husband and wife with the opposite sex that are not proportionally restricted.⁴¹ This normative shift directly weakens the preventive function that should be carried out by married couples where what was once considered beyond the limit is now considered reasonable so that the formulation of interaction limits based on *sadd adz-dzari'ah* becomes a normative urgency that cannot be postponed.⁴²

³⁶ Siti Mutmainnah et al., "Marriage in the Social Media Era in Indonesia: A Social Analysis of Changes in Spousal Relations in the Modern Family," *Al-Zayn: Journal of Social & Legal Sciences* 4, no. 1 (2026): 6284.

³⁷ Moh Aji The Impact of Social Media on Marriage Harmony in the Digital Era, *Journal of Health Education* 7, no. 2 (2025): 3.

³⁸ Resti Juliana Putri and Windi Asyriatul Husna, "The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Internet Infidelity Behavior in Married Couples in West Sumatra," *PAEDAGOGY: Journal of Education and Psychology* 4, no. 1 (2024): 83.

³⁹ J.A. Asyraf, "Friends Are Death: Cognitive Communication Perspectives in the Phenomenon of Infidelity in the Circle of Friends," *Nusantara Scientific Journal (JINU)* 2, no. 5 (2025): 858.

⁴⁰ Khairi Muslimah and Muhammad Marizal, "The Influence of Male and Female Co-Worker Interactions in the Office Environment Leads to Infidelity," *Psychobulletin: Psychological Scientific Bulletin* 3, no. 3 (2022): 165.

⁴¹ Nibras Syafriani Manna, Shinta Doriza, and Maya Oktaviani, "Divorce Lawsuit: A Study of the Causes of Divorce in Families in Indonesia," 14.

⁴² A. Agustin and W.S. Ashari, "An Analytical Study of Factors Causing Spousal Infidelity from the Perspective of Islamic Law," *JURISTISI: Journal of Islamic Law and Law* 13, no. 1 (2026): 2.

Sadd Adz-Dzari'ah's Analysis of Opposite Sex Interactions

Departing from the explanation of the phenomenon above, the analytical step that must be taken is to map the position of the interaction between husband and wife with the opposite sex in the framework of *sadd adz-dzari'ah*. The starting point is that in Islamic law, interaction between men and women is not something that is absolutely prohibited. The thing that is at issue is not the interaction itself, but when the interaction changes its function to *dzari'ah*, which is an intermediary that leads to something that is forbidden. In the treasures of *ushul fiqh*, this principle is related to the rule of "*al-umuru bi maqasidiha*" (all affairs are judged according to their purpose), which indicates that the legal judgment of an interaction cannot be separated from the direction and purpose of the interaction.⁴³ The problem of interaction with outsiders is one of the main sources of family dysfunction that is most often unaware of by the perpetrator.⁴⁴ Thus, the analysis of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* does not mean criminalizing all forms of social association, but selectively identifying which interactions have changed from the status of *mubah* to *dzari'ah* that must be prevented.

When viewed from the perspective of *sadd adz-dzari'ah*, the deviant interaction between a husband or wife and the opposite sex actually does not happen suddenly, but through a gradual process. Often, these gaps start from small, seemingly mundane things but slowly lead to bigger problems. Therefore, this principle is here to help us be more aware of and close those small doors before they become real betrayals. This stage can be mapped as follows: starting from the stage of introduction which is *mubah*, then progressing to the stage of *intensification* where the frequency and depth of communication increases, then entering the stage of emotional closeness where affective bonds begin to form, and ultimately potentially leading to the stage of conflict that collapses the household that has been built. Research on the causes of divorce in Indonesia confirms that the presence of a third party begins with a gradual process that begins with interactions that are not proportionally restricted.⁴⁵ Research on divorce in urban areas also identifies that infidelity is generally caused by an imbalance between work and personal life, as well as the influence of poorly managed technology.⁴⁶ This gradual pattern is the fundamental reason why *sadd adz-dzari'ah* is relevant, because damage does not appear instantaneously, but through a series of stages in which each level opens a wider door to a greater *mafsadah* and therefore prevention must be carried out from the earliest stage.

In the context of interaction through social media, the application of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* requires further elaboration because the digital dimension has no direct precedent in classical *fiqh* texts. However, the methodology of *ushul fiqh* allows the development of law through *qiyas* (analogy) and *maslahah mursalah*. The prohibition of *khalwat* can be *qiyased* into the digital realm, because intensive private communication through WhatsApp or Instagram DMs essentially creates a space "alone virtually" that has the potential to cause the same slander. An analytical study of the factors that trigger infidelity from the perspective of Islamic law reveals that the loose social environment in setting social boundaries and uncontrolled use of social media are the two most dominant

⁴³ Ramadani Siregar, "Saddu Al-Dzari'ah's Approach in Islamic Studies," 48.

⁴⁴ Musaitir, "Problematics of Household Life Pair of Husband-Wife Family Law Islamic Perspective," *Al-IHKAM: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga* (2020): 40.

⁴⁵ Nibras Syafriani Manna, Shinta Doriza, and Maya Oktaviani, "Divorce Sues," 14.

⁴⁶ N.D.J. Razak, Y. Archdiani, and L.S. Arlianty, "Divorce in Various Urban Areas Due to Infidelity," *Global: Multidisciplinary Scientific Journal* 1, no. 4 (2024): 216.

external factors that encourage infidelity.⁴⁷ These findings strengthen the urgency of implementing *sadd adz-dzari'ah* concretely in the dimension of digital interaction, which in this study will be realized through a number of operational limitations that are practical and can be directly implemented in daily household life.

As for the context of the work environment, *sadd adz-dzari'ah* can be applied by taking into account the unique characteristics of professional interactions that are structural and repetitive. In contrast to social interactions that are voluntary, interactions in the workplace are often unavoidable because they are part of a professional obligation. Therefore, the application of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* here does not mean prohibiting all work interactions with the opposite sex, but rather formulating a firm boundary between legitimate work interactions and interactions that have gone beyond professional boundaries to personal areas that have the potential to trigger emotional closeness. Studies on the application of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* reason in the context of marital relationships show that efforts to prevent various opportunities that have the potential to damage domestic harmony are actually part of the mutual understanding embedded in couples who live and practice the values of Islamic teachings.⁴⁸ The phenomenon of infidelity in the work environment often begins from light conversations that shift from the professional realm to a more personal realm, to the development of an improper emotional closeness between the two parties.⁴⁹ This condition confirms that the boundary between reasonable work interaction and intimate communication is a critical line that should not be ignored in professional relationships. Therefore, the application of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* to the dimension of interaction in the work environment is very relevant and will be formulated in detail in this study as a preventive effort against potential damage that can shake the stability and harmony of the family.

It is important to emphasize that the application of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* in the context of opposite-sex interaction is not absolute and cannot be generalized without considering the context and conditions. Islam itself has provided a clear example that cross-gender interactions are allowed in the context of education, trade, health, and other public affairs. Imam An-Nawawi in *Syarh Saheeh Muslim* shows tolerance for interaction between men and women in certain conditions that are difficult to avoid, such as crowds during worship, as long as they maintain manners and avoid *fitnah*.⁵⁰ In line with that, Wahbah az-Zuhaili in *Al-Fiqh al-Islami wa Adillatuhu* explained that the mixing of men and women can be allowed if there is an urgent need (*hājah*) and remains within the limits of the sharia.⁵¹ Both views have their own sides of tolerance, but rest on different grounds: An-Nawawi requires a passive condition that is difficult to avoid, while Az-Zuhaili requires an active and justifiable need. This distinction is relevant to distinguish incidental physical interactions from digital or professional interactions that generally occur by conscious choice, thus demanding stricter standards of needs.

This critical analysis is important so that the resulting formulation of limitations is not excessive (*ifraat*) which will actually complicate the social life of the Muslim

⁴⁷ A. Agustin and W.S. Ashari, "An Analytical Study of Factors Causing Spousal Infidelity from the Perspective of Islamic Law," 3

⁴⁸ Ardiyansa and Al Mahdi, "The Reason of Sadd al-Dzari'ah in the Husband-Wife Relationship of Traders in Kendari City," *Al-Qisthu: Journal of Legal Studies* 21, no. 1 (2023): 103.

⁴⁹ Khairi Muslimah and Muhammad Marizal, "The Influence of Male and Female Co-Worker Interactions in the Office Environment Leads to Infidelity," 165.

⁵⁰ Imam al-Nawawi, *Syarh Saheeh Muslim*, vol. 9, 178

⁵¹ Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, *Al-Fiqh al-Islami wa Adillatuhu*, Juz VII, 115.

community and is contrary to the spirit of convenience (*taysir*) in Islamic law. On the other hand, the formulation produced by this study seeks to find a balance point (*wasath*) between legitimate social needs on the one hand and protection of household resilience and prosperity on the other.

Based on all of the above analysis, it can be identified that the criteria that determine when an interaction with the opposite sex is categorized as *dzari'ah* that must be prevented. Classical fiqh scholars have formulated several conditions that make opposite sex interaction forbidden: first, the gathering of men and women in a quiet place without the bonds of marriage and mahram (*khalwat*); second, there is a strong suspicion that will cause slander; Third, it is not only limited to needs; fourth, there is excessive softness of voice as Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'ala* said in Q.S. Al-Ahzab (33): 32.

...فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا

"So do not humble your voice (with meekness that is made-up) so that the lust of the one who has a disease in his heart arises and speak good words."⁵²

Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah emphasized that any intermediary that predominantly leads to *mafsadah* must be closed, and interactions that contain the above elements fall into the category of high-risk *dzari'ah* that cannot be allowed.⁵³ In the modern context, these criteria need to be expanded to include the digital dimension: intensive private communication without clear *intentions*, sharing personal feelings or complaints that should only be conveyed to the partner, and hiding communication from the partner. Relationships that initially feel very close and supportive often fall into betrayal when ethical boundaries begin to be ignored. The presence of social media also contributes to muddling the atmosphere, because it opens up opportunities for the emergence of emotional attachment secretly which slowly becomes an entry point for infidelity, both in the form of feelings and physical. Understanding these criteria will be an important basis for formulating operational indicators in this study.⁵⁴

To deepen the analysis, the comparison of the views of classical and contemporary scholars needs to be built as a complementary dialogue. Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah laid the basis for the classification of *dzari'ah* by emphasizing the importance of the intention and purpose behind an interaction. Ash-Syatibi refined this framework through the certainty of impact (*qath'i, ghalib, nadir*), so that the assessment of *dzari'ah* is not only about intention, but also proportionality between the potential of *mafsadah* and *maslahah*. Wahbah Az-Zuhaili continued this framework to the contemporary realm, emphasizing that Islamic law is able to adapt to the changing times through systematic *ijtihad*, including the issue of digital interaction. Yusuf Al-Qaradawi complements the three through the principle of *fiqh al-awlawiyyat*, which reminds that road closures (*sadd*) must consider the priority scale so as not to fall into rigidity (*tasyaddud*) which is contrary to the spirit of convenience (*taysir*) in the shari'a. These four views, instead of standing alone, form a single progressive line of argument, from the foundation of intention, the

⁵² QS. Al-Ahzab [33]: 32.

⁵³ Ibnu Qayyim al-Jauziyah, *I'lam al-Muwaqqi'in 'an Rabb al-'Alamin*, 14.

⁵⁴ J.A. Asyraf, "Friends Are Death: Cognitive Communication Perspectives in the Phenomenon of Infidelity in the Circle of Friends," 858.

refinement of proportionality, to contextual adaptation, to the balancing of priorities, which is the basis for the preventive model formulated in this study.⁵⁵

The relevance of this approach is even more urgent considering various new issues in Islamic family law in the digital era, ranging from unlimited interaction in virtual space, the potential of *nusyuz* through social media, to marital relationship conflicts that originate from cyberspace have not received adequate answers in existing Islamic family law regulations. Musarrofa, Muttaqin, and Amaliyah note that the ease of interacting virtually with the opposite sex without clear boundaries has given rise to a number of serious problems in Islamic family law, including privacy issues and the dynamics of couples' relationships that can no longer be explained by conventional definitions. Furthermore, the inability of the legal system to accommodate the development of the digital age has the potential to negatively impact the fulfillment of individual civil rights, including privacy and equality in household relationships.⁵⁶ This situation thus demands a contextual reinterpretation of Islamic family law that is responsive to new challenges related to digital privacy, technological pressures, and the dynamics of partner relationships in the modern era. This combination of classical and contemporary approaches is the methodology of this research in formulating the limits of interaction that are proportionate, relevant, and widely accepted by modern Muslim society.

Formulation of Restrictions on Interaction between Husband and Wife with the Opposite Sex Based on Sadd Adz-Dzari'ah

Before formulating specific interaction limits, it is necessary to first lay down the basic principles that form the foundation of this entire formulation. The first principle is that Islam basically does not prohibit interactions between men and women who are not mahrams absolutely, what is prohibited are interactions that contain the potential for fitnah, orgasm, or that actually lead to haram as explained in the analysis of *the classification of dzari'ah*. The second principle is that any interaction that is initially *mubah* can change its status to be forbidden if it becomes *dzari'ah*, which is a path that leads to damage as has been proven by the pattern. The third principle is proportionality, i.e. the limits formulated must consider the balance between legitimate social needs and the protection of the integrity of the household. Although married couples often have differing views on many things, this study shows that they still have one main vision: to keep the family ark from the threat of a rift.⁵⁷ This fundamental agreement is proof that, consciously or unconsciously, the couple has applied the principle of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* by trying to close any loopholes that could damage the foundation of their family. The fourth principle is that this restriction applies symmetrically to both husband and wife because the protection of family unity and harmony is a shared responsibility within the framework of *mu'asyarah bil ma'ruf*. These four basic principles are the spirit of all the formulations of concrete boundaries that will be presented in this study.

In the context of direct physical interaction, Islamic law has established a number of fundamental limits. The most important thing is the prohibition of *khalwat*, which is the prohibition of being alone between men and women who are not mahrams in a place

⁵⁵ Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Fi Fiqh al-Awlawiyyat: Dirasah Jadidah fi Daw'i al-Qur'an wa al-Sunnah*, cet. 2nd (Cairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 1996)

⁵⁶ Ita Musarrofa, Husnul Muttaqin, dan Ridha Amaliyah, "The Problems of Islamic Family Law in the Digital Era and Its Relevance to Renewal of the Compilation of Islamic Law," 101.

⁵⁷ Ardiyansa and Al Mahdi, "The Reason of Sadd al-Dzari'ah in the Husband-Wife Relationship of Traders in Kendari City," *Al-Qisthu*: 103.

where no one else is seen based on the hadith of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him)

لَا يَخْلُونَ رَجُلٌ بِأَمْرَةٍ إِلَّا وَمَعَهَا مُحَرَّمٌ

"A man shall not be alone with a woman, unless there is a mahram" (HR. Bukhari-Muslim).⁵⁸

Imam An-Nawawi in *Syarh An-Nawawi Ala Al-Muslim* affirms that the scholars have agreed to prohibit men and women who are not *mahrams* to be alone without a third person who can supervise them.⁵⁹ Within the framework of *sadd adz-dzari'ah*, the limitation of face-to-face interaction with the opposite sex can be operationalized through four cumulative conditions. First, the interaction must be based on clear and *legitimate needs* (wishes); if there is no underlying wish, then the interaction has the potential to become *dzari'ah* towards haram⁶⁰. Second, interaction must take place in an open place and can be witnessed by others, so as to avoid *the condition of khalwat* that is prohibited by the sharia.⁶¹ Thirdly, it is not accompanied by excessive softness or melodiousness of voice, as affirmed in the words of Allah *Subhanahu wa Ta'ala* Q.S. Al-Ahzab (33): 32 which prohibits women from speaking in a way that can arouse the *orgasm* of the opposite sex.⁶² Fourth, the interaction does not last longer than the required duration, because the extension of time without the need opens up opportunities for slander.⁶³

The second dimension that is the main novelty of this research is the formulation of interaction limits through social media and digital communication. There is no classical fiqh text that specifically governs WhatsApp, Instagram, or *Direct Messages*, but the principles of Islamic law allow for the extension of analogies (*qiyas*) from the prohibition of *khalwat* to the digital realm. Wahbah Az-Zuhaili emphasized that all forms of *khalwat* that bring together men and women who are not *mahrams* together in conditions that have the potential to cause fitnah are haram and must be closed based on the principle of *sadd adz-dzari'ah*.⁶⁴ The validity of this analogy rests on the similarity of *'illat* between physical *khalwat* and private digital interaction, i.e. isolation from the supervision of other parties (*infirad 'an al-muraqabah*) which opens up opportunities for *mafsadah*. Even in digital communication, this element tends to be stronger: there are no witnesses, no time and space constraints, and traces of conversations can be removed, so the risks posed have the potential to go beyond *conventional physical khalwat*. Based on the principle of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* in Islamic *fiqh*, interaction between men and women who are not *mahram* must be limited to things that have clear needs (*hājah*) and are kept so as not to lead to fitnah and *mafsadah*,⁶⁵ so as to analogy (*qiyas*) This principle in the realm of digital

⁵⁸ Muhammad bin Ismail al-Bukhari, *Saheeh al-Bukhari* (Beirut: Dar Thuq al-Najah, 1422 H), vol. 7, p. 37, hadith no. 5233; Muslim bin al-Hajjaj al-Naisaburi, *Saheeh Muslim* (Beirut: Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 978, hadith no. 1341.

⁵⁹ Abu Zakariya Muhyiddin Yahya bin Syaraf An-Nawawi, *Syarh An-Nawawi Ala Al-Muslim*, Juz IX, 178.

⁶⁰ Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, *Al-Fiqh al-Islami wa Adillatuhu* Juz II, 317.

⁶¹ Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani, *Fath al-Bari Syarh Saheeh al-Bukhari*, Juz IX (Beirut: Dar al-Ma'rifah, 1379 AH), 334

⁶² Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia, *Al-Qur'an and Its Translation* (Jakarta: Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2019).

⁶³ Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, *Al-Fiqh al-Islami wa Adillatuhu*, Juz VII, 116.

⁶⁴ Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, *Al-Fiqh al-Islami wa Adillatuhu*, Juz VII, 116–117.

⁶⁵ Ibn Qayyim al-Jauziyah, *I'lam al-Muwaqqi'in 'an Rabb al-'Alamin*, Juz III (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, t.t.), 14; Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmo' al-Fatawa*, Juz XX (Riyadh: Dar al-Wafa', 1997), 48.

communication, the author formulates that the limits of digital interaction between men and women who are not *mahrams* can be formulated in several forms: first, communication with the opposite sex is carried out only for the interests that are justified by the Shari'ah, such as work, education, or certain social needs; second, avoid private communication that takes place intensively and continuously without any clear need; third, not using language, diction, or expressions that may cause emotional closeness, seduction, or attraction that goes beyond the limits of need; fourth, not to make the opposite sex a place to share personal problems or intimate complaints that should be maintained within the scope of the household; and fifth, maintaining the principle of openness between husband and wife to digital communication patterns as part of efforts to maintain trust and family harmony.⁶⁶ These five boundaries collectively form a digital fence that prevents the emotional closeness that is the entrance to *mafsadah*.

The third context that requires the formulation of its own boundaries is the work environment, given the structural, repetitive, and difficult nature of its interactions. The basic principle is that Islam allows the active participation of men and women in the world of work, but while maintaining the manners of sharia that prevent the growth of problematic interactions. Within the framework of *sadd adz-dzari'ah*, the limits of interaction in the work environment can be formulated in four operational categories: first, work communication with the opposite sex is limited to matters directly related to professional duties and responsibilities; second, avoid *one-on-one* meetings with colleagues of the opposite sex in closed spaces or outside working hours without clear needs; third, not forwarding work communication to personal communication that discusses personal, family, or heartfelt issues; Fourth, if the job requires intensive interaction with the opposite sex, then transparency to the partner is mandatory as a form of prevention from the emergence of suspicions that undermine trust. Often, infidelity in the work environment starts with small things, such as sharing personal stories that have nothing to do with work. From this seemingly ordinary vent, a sense of comfort slowly emerges that finally blurs professional boundaries among colleagues.⁶⁷ From the perspective of Islamic family law, maintaining distance from personal communication is a real step from the principle of *sadd adz-dzari'ah*, which is to close the slightest gap before potential domestic rifts occur.

One of the most operational contributions of this research is the formulation of concrete indicators that can be used to assess when an interaction that was originally *mubah* has turned into *dzari'ah* that must be prevented. These indicators are a synthesis of the analysis of gradual patterns, *risky dzari'ah* criteria, and empirical data on the dynamics of problematic interactions. Based on this synthesis, six main indicators can be formulated: First, the indicator of the frequency and intensity of interactions that change from occasional to daily routine without changing needs. Second, indicators of communication content that shift from formal or professional topics to personal, emotional, or confidential topics. Third, an indicator of confidentiality is an attempt to hide communication from your partner, such as deleting messages. Fourth, emotional indicators of longing, excessive comfort, or emotional dependence on the opposite sex.

⁶⁶ The formulation of this limitation is the result of the author's analytical *ijtihad* developed from the principle of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* and the prohibition of *khalwat* in classical *fiqh*, adapted into the context of contemporary digital communication.

⁶⁷ Khairi Muslimah and Muhammad Marizal, "The Influence of Male and Female Co-Worker Interactions in the Office Environment Leads to Infidelity," 165.

Fifth, comparison indicators begin to compare couples with others negatively. Sixth, the indicator of communication time that takes place outside of normal hours, especially at night. Communication that is initially intense and supportive can develop into a form of betrayal due to the loss of ethical boundaries in relationships, and the development of social media increases the opportunity for implicit emotional involvement that becomes a gateway to forms of emotional and physical infidelity,⁶⁸ this confirms that the six indicators above are not just theoretical lists, but reflections of real patterns documented in various studies.

Based on the entire analysis of this study, it proposes an operational classification of husband-wife interaction with the opposite sex into three legal categories that are dynamic and contextual. The first category of *Mubah*, permissible interactions, namely communication with the opposite sex that meets the requirements of a clear wish, takes place openly and is known by the partner, does not contain excessive personal content, and does not meet any of the six *indicators of dzari'ah*. The second category of *Makruh* is interactions that should be avoided because they contain the potential *for dzari'ah*, such as *chat communication* that is more than just a necessity but has not reached a dangerous stage, or interactions in the workplace that begin to go beyond professional boundaries but are not accompanied by real emotional closeness. The third category is *Haram/Must Be Prevented*, interactions that have met the criteria *of high-risk dzari'ah*, namely intensive confidential communication, emotional closeness hidden from the partner, or repeated private meetings without the need *for legitimacy*. Mixing between men and women has different laws depending on whether it is in accordance with the provisions of the Shari'ah or not, and is forbidden in certain circumstances,⁶⁹ which is the normative basis that this kind of tiered classification has strong roots in the Islamic *fiqh* tradition, not solely contemporary *ijtihad*.

The culmination of all the above formulations is an integrative preventive model which is the main contribution (*novelty*) of this research. This model combines three dimensions of physical interaction, digital communication, and the work environment in one cohesive normative framework based on *adz-dzari'ah sadd*. This model is called the *Three-Space Preventive Model*, which works on three layers: the first layer is a physical space governed by *the khalwat ban* and the four conditions of face-to-face interaction; the second layer is a digital space governed by the principles *of digital khalwat* and the five limits of digital communication; and the third layer is a professional space governed by four categories of work interaction restrictions.

⁶⁸ J.A. Asyraf, "Friends Are Death: Cognitive Communication Perspectives in the Phenomenon of Infidelity in the Circle of Friends," 858.

⁶⁹ Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, *Al-Fiqh al-Islami wa Adillatuhu*, Juz VII, 117.

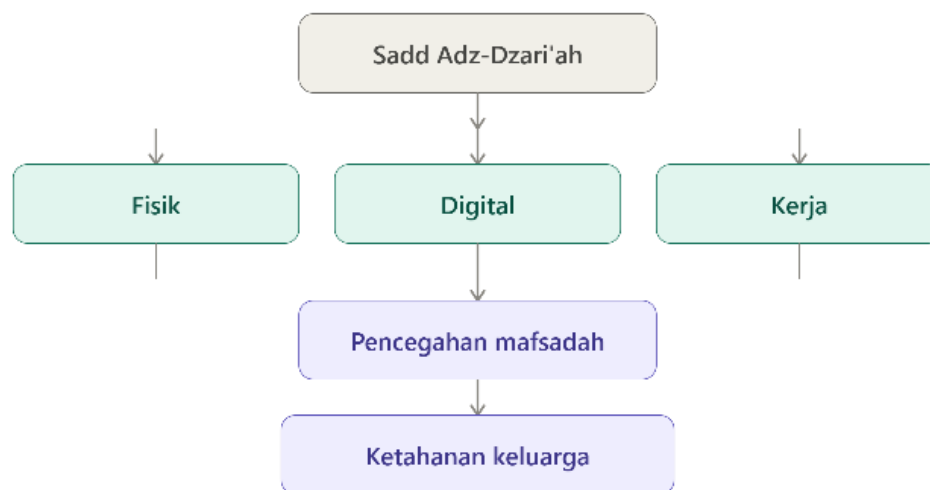


Figure 1. Three-Space Preventive Model Conceptual Model in the Framework of Sadd Adz-Dzari'ah

These three spaces are interconnected because in modern reality, problematic interactions often migrate from one space to another starting from the professional space, continuing to the digital space, then threatening the physical space. One of the strengths of Islamic family law lies in its adaptive nature, namely its ability to remain relevant in the midst of ongoing social change. This is evident when Islamic law is faced with various domestic problems born from the digital era, ranging from excessive dependence on technological devices, friction between couples triggered by interactions on social media platforms, to various forms of conflicts originating from cyberspace. Thus, the Preventive Three-Space Model based on *sadd adz-dzari'ah* is a concrete and comprehensive normative response of Islamic family law to the complexities of modern life that have not been systematically answered.⁷⁰

The Relevance of the Preventive Model to Indonesian Family Law Regulations

The Preventive Three Spaces Model formulated by this study is in line with the obligation of marital fidelity in the Marriage Law (Articles 30–34) and KHI Article 77, as well as filling the regulatory gap for fidelity violations that occur digitally.⁷¹ The provisions of *nusyuz* as written in KHI Article 84 are also a relevant positive legal basis to strengthen the argument of this research. Although this provision only regulates *nusyuz* on the wife's side and has not explicitly accommodated *nusyuz* from the husband's side, the six indicators of the shift in interaction from the *mubah* category to *dzari'ah* formulated in this study have the potential to fill the normative gap through the provision of criteria that apply equally to husbands and wives in the context of cross-gender interaction in the digital era. In line with this, the existence of Law Number 16 of 2019 as an amendment to the Marriage Law affirms the responsive nature of family regulations in Indonesia to the dynamics of the times, an orientation that is coherent with this

⁷⁰ Mustafa Kamal, "Islamic Family Law in Managing Husband and Wife Relations in the Age of Technology," 135.

⁷¹ Mokhammad Samson Fajar, Muhammad Nur, dan Dian Ayuwita, "Toxic Online Relationships in Muslim Marriage: Reconstructing Prophetic Digital Ethics in Indonesian Islamic Family Law," *Sakina: Journal of Family Studies* 10, no. 2 (2026),

research's efforts in contextualizing the concept of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* to contemporary digital interaction problems.⁷²

This research has significant theoretical implications for the development of Islamic Family Law in two main aspects. First, this study shows that the methodology of *classical ushul fiqh*, in this case *sadd adz-dzari'ah*, has an adequate capacity to answer contemporary problems without the need to abandon the established normative framework. This emphasizes that the reform of Islamic family law does not always have to be in the form of a deconstruction of the text, but can be done through the expansion of the application (*tathbiq*) of existing methodologies. As emphasized by Takhim, various new problems that were not previously specifically discussed in the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet (*peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him*) can actually be answered through the *sadd adz-dzari'ah* method as a preventive effort so that something does not have a negative impact and this is what has been systematically demonstrated in this study.⁷³ Second, the formulation of interaction limits enriches the treasure of social *fiqh* studies that has not received adequate attention in the Indonesian Islamic family law literature, especially in terms of its operationalization in the digital era. Thus, this study opens up space for further studies that are more specific on each of these interaction dimensions. One of the strengths of Islamic family law lies in its adaptive nature, namely its ability to remain relevant in the midst of ongoing social change. Instead of being marginalized by modernity, traditional values in Islamic law are actually able to transform into contextual and solutive ethical guidance.

Practically, the formulation of interaction limits produced by this study has direct utility value for modern Muslim household life on four levels. First, the Preventive Three Spaces Model which can be used as a concrete guide for married couples in managing their interactions with the opposite sex, especially in the digital era full of *potential cyber-infidelity*. Second, six indicators of change from *mubah* to *dzari'ah* that can be an early warning system for couples to recognize danger signs before the interaction develops into a more serious problem. Third, the operational classification of the three legal categories provides clear practical guidance on which interactions should be resumed, which should be watched out for, and which should be stopped. Fourth, the results of this research can be integrated into the premarital guidance curriculum (*Bimwin*) organized by the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) throughout Indonesia, so that the bride-to-be gets concrete normative provisions about the limits of interaction with the opposite sex since before marriage.⁷⁴

Sociologically, the blurring of the boundaries between public and private spaces due to social media has created conditions in which the norms of conventional social interaction are no longer adequate to protect the dignity and solidity of the Muslim family institution. This is where *sadd adz-dzari'ah* comes into play not as an instrument that complicates social life, but as a proportionate and value-based protection mechanism. Intensive use of social media contributes to a decline in the quality of face-to-face communication and an increased risk of online infidelity, but family values that include

⁷² Nabilah H. Wafiroh and N. A. Yusuf, "Contemporary Fiqh as an Evaluative Framework for Indonesian Family Law," *Southeast Asian Journal of Islamic Studies* (2026), <https://doi.org/10.66127/835zfv15>.

⁷³ Muhamad Takhim, "Saddu al-Dzari'ah in Muamalah Islam," 19.

⁷⁴ Moh. Jeweherul Kalamiah, Mohammad Syaiin Safi Habibi, and Syaif Aly Asy'ari, "Revitalization and Digitalization of Marriage Guidance: Printing the Sakinah Family in the Modern Era," *Journal of Cross-Country Islamic Studies (CBJIS)* 7, no. 2 (2025): 344.

religion, culture, and marital commitment play a role as a mediating factor in controlling these negative impacts,⁷⁵ suggesting that the normative approach based on Islamic values as formulated in this study actually strengthens these mediating factors. Therefore, this study recommends three things: first, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) needs to consider issuing fatwas or practical guidelines on the limits of digital interaction between husband and wife with the opposite sex; second, Islamic marriage counseling institutions need to adopt the *adz-dzari'ah sadd framework*, especially the Preventive Three Spaces Model as a normative basis in couples assistance; and third, further research based on empirical case studies in religious courts needs to be conducted to test and strengthen the normative formulations that have been produced by this research.

CONCLUSION

This research shows that *sadd adz-dzari'ah* has a strong normative capacity as a preventive legal instrument in Islamic Family Law to maintain the resilience of Muslim families in the midst of changing interaction patterns in the digital era. In contrast to the understanding that places *sadd adz-dzari'ah* only as a method of legal *istinbāt*, this study confirms that the concept functions as a preventive mechanism that proportionately limits actions that have the potential to lead to *mafsadah*, in line with the goals of *maqāsid al-syarī'ah*, especially the protection of honor (*ḥifẓ al-'ird*) and posterity (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*). The main finding of this study is the formulation of the Three-Space Preventive Model, which is a normative model that integrates the boundaries of marital interaction with the opposite sex in three interrelated living spaces, namely the physical space, the digital space, and the professional space. The model is equipped with six operational indicators that are able to identify the shift in interaction from the category of *mubāḥ* to *dzari'ah*, as well as a stratified normative classification (*mubāḥ*, *makrūh*, and *ḥarām*) resulting in more measurable and applicable guidelines than formulations developed in the previous literature.

The theoretical contribution of this research lies in the reconstruction of the classical concept of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* into a family law framework that is responsive to the dynamics of contemporary society. This research expands the scope of *fiqh mu'āsyarah* studies which have been more oriented towards face-to-face interaction by including digital and professional dimensions as an integral part of modern family relations. Thus, this study fills the gap in the literature on Islamic Family Law through the preparation of a preventive model that is conceptual as well as operational, and provides a normative basis for the development of family development policies that are adaptive to the challenges of communication and interaction in the digital era.

However, this study is still limited to a normative approach so the effectiveness of the Three-Space Preventive Model has not been verified through empirical testing. Therefore, further research needs to test the validity and effectiveness of this model in various groups of Muslim couples with an empirical and mixed methods approach. In addition, comparative research on the application of the principle of *sadd adz-dzari'ah* in the family law system in various Muslim countries is needed to strengthen the conceptual generalization. In terms of policy, this study recommends that the Three-Space Preventive Model be integrated into the curriculum of marriage guidance and family education at the Ministry of Religious Affairs, be used as a guideline for interaction ethics for Muslim couples in the digital and professional space, and become one of the references in the

⁷⁵ Siti Mutmainnah et al., "Marriage in the Social Media Era in Indonesia: Social Analysis of Changes in Husband and Wife Relationships in the Modern Family," 6287

development of regulations and programs to strengthen family resilience based on the values of maqāṣid al-syarī'ah.

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