


Applying Al-Ta'lil bi Al-Hikmah to Social Media Use: A Complementary to the Maqasid Shariah Approach in Islamic Digital Ethics

Md Azzaat Ahsanie Lokman¹, Muaz Mohd Noor¹, Nurin Sofiya Mohamad Nadzli¹, S. Salahudin Suyurno², Muhammad Safwan Harun³, & Saim Kayadibi⁴

¹Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Melaka, Melaka, Malaysia

²Academy of Contemporary Islamic Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Selangor, Malaysia

³Department of Fiqh and Usul, Academy of Islamic Studies, Universiti Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

⁴Institute of Islamic Economics and Finance, Marmara University, Istanbul, Türkiye

✉ mdazzaat@uitm.edu.my

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of social media has generated significant ethical challenges, including misinformation, harmful online discourse, privacy erosion, and excessive digital consumption. Although Islamic ethics has increasingly engaged these issues, primarily through Maqasid Shariah-based frameworks, existing approaches often remain too general to guide the everyday moral decisions faced by individual users in digitally mediated environments. Addressing this gap, this study examines the application of al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah, a jurisprudential method that derives ethical judgment from the underlying wisdom (hikmah) of Islamic norms, to contemporary social media use. Employing a qualitative jurisprudential analysis grounded in usul fiqh, the study conducts an interpretive textual analysis of Quranic injunctions, Prophetic traditions, and classical juristic discussions to identify core ethical wisdom related to communication, privacy, moderation, and accountability. These insights are then thematically applied to key domains of social media practice, including content sharing,

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online criticism, time management, and the ethical implications of algorithmic influence at the level of user behaviour. The analysis demonstrates that a hikmah-centred approach enables more nuanced moral discernment than rule-based or exclusively Maqasid-oriented models by translating higher ethical objectives into actionable guidance for individual digital conduct. Conceptually and methodologically, this study advances Islamic digital ethics by operationalising al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah as a complementary framework that refines Maqasid reasoning at the micro-ethical level. In doing so, it offers a principled yet flexible model for ethical social media engagement that aligns individual integrity with broader Islamic moral objectives.

Keywords: *Al-Ta'lil Bi Al-Hikmah; Algorithmic Ethics; Digital Ethics; Islamic Social Media Ethics; Maqasid Shariah; Misinformation; Social Media Use*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has fundamentally reshaped how individuals communicate, interact, and exchange information. Social media platforms, in particular, have emerged as influential spaces for self-expression, knowledge dissemination, and social engagement (Abokhodair et al., 2020; Febriani & Ritonga, 2022). At the same time, these platforms have intensified a range of ethical challenges, including the spread of misinformation, harmful online discourse, erosion of privacy, excessive digital consumption, and adverse effects on mental well-being (Fanindy & Mupida, 2021; Faverio et al., 2025; Fitria et al., 2025). Collectively, these challenges raise a central ethical question: how should individuals navigate social media in a manner that remains morally responsible and aligned with Islamic values?

From an Islamic perspective, ethical guidance for human conduct is well established through principles derived from the Quran, the Sunnah, and Islamic jurisprudence. However, contemporary digital practices pose dilemmas that were not explicitly addressed in classical legal discussions. This absence does not reflect a lack of ethical resources within Islamic law, but rather the absence of direct rulings on digital communication and a clearly articulated

method for extending ethical reasoning to rapidly evolving online contexts (Sa'diyah et al., 2021; Rosidi et al., 2022). As a result, ethical evaluation of social media use increasingly requires interpretive and context-sensitive approaches capable of guiding everyday user behaviour beyond binary classifications of permissibility and prohibition.

Existing scholarship on Islamic digital ethics has responded to this challenge primarily through Maqasid Shariah-based frameworks, which emphasise the protection of essential values such as faith, intellect, dignity, and social welfare (Saifuddeen et al., 2014; Ibrahim et al., 2019). While these approaches provide indispensable ethical orientation, they often operate at a high level of abstraction and remain outcome-focused. Consequently, they may offer limited guidance for ethically ambiguous, micro-level decisions faced by individual users, such as how to frame criticism, whether to share unverified information, how to manage digital attention, or how much personal data to disclose (Ahmad et al., 2025). These everyday decisions require not only an awareness of ethical objectives, but also a method for discerning the moral wisdom underpinning specific actions in particular contexts.

In this regard, *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah*, a jurisprudential mode of reasoning that focuses on the underlying wisdom (*hikmah*) of Islamic rulings rather than their formal legal causes (*'illah*) offers a promising and underexplored ethical framework. By foregrounding intention, moral purpose, and social consequence, this approach enables a more adaptive and context-sensitive form of ethical reasoning. Rather than replacing Maqasid Shariah, *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* refines and operationalises it, translating higher objectives into actionable moral guidance for individual conduct in complex digital environments.

Against this backdrop, the present study aims to systematically apply *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* to ethical social media use from an Islamic

perspective. Focusing on individual users rather than platform governance, the study examines key domains of digital practice, including content sharing, online discourse, time management, privacy, and the ethical implications of algorithmic influence for user behaviour. By articulating a *ḥikmah*-based ethical framework grounded in Islamic jurisprudential reasoning, this study contributes a novel conceptual and methodological approach to Islamic digital ethics, addressing a critical gap in existing Maqasid-centred analyses and offering a more granular guide for responsible digital engagement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Domains of Ethics in Social Media

Based on literature review, we identified at least four main domains in social media ethics: (1) Content Creation and Sharing, (2) Online Discussions and Debates, (3) Time Management and Social Media Addiction, and (4) Privacy and Algorithmic Ethics as discussed below:

Content Creation and Sharing: Studies often highlight misinformation and deceptive content in social media. For example, a thematic analysis of thousands of social media comments about the HPV vaccine found pervasive misinformation, with cross-cutting themes like adverse reactions, unnecessary vaccine, conspiracy theories, and mistrust of authority (Boatman et al., 2024). There is a strong emphasis on the responsibility of creators to shape public opinion ethically and the need for ethical principles to guide content creation and dissemination (Patalauskaitė, 2024).

Online Discussions and Debates: Akbar & Safdar (2023), show prevalent harassment and hate speech in their study of a Facebook political pages. Their thematic coding revealed three major hate-discourse themes: denigration through abusive language,

dehumanization (e.g. comparing opponents to animals), and character assassination (accusations of being traitors or threats). These findings demonstrate how polarized, uncivil discourse emerges as key ethical concerns in online debate. The credibility of information and the ethical environment in online communities are also central concerns (Grigorescu & Baiasu, 2023). Social media platforms influence decision-making, and ethical debates focus on the credibility of word-of-mouth information, the role of social support, and the need for ethical standards to foster trustworthy discussions (Hajli, 2016).

Time Management and Social Media Addiction: Social media platforms are often intentionally designed to be addictive, raising significant ethical concerns. Social media addiction is considered a serious moral problem due to its exploitative nature and the harm it causes users, which is distinct from other forms of addiction. The attention-economy business model incentivizes these unethical practices (Bhargava & Velasquez, 2020). Prolonged social media use alters brain physiology and emotional regulation, leading to addiction among teenagers, with AI-driven algorithms accelerating the development of addictive behaviors (De et al., 2025).

Privacy and Algorithmic Ethics: Privacy issues are pervasive, as social media requires users to compromise personal privacy, leading to vulnerabilities and potential breaches. Algorithmic ethics involve concerns about data ownership, transparency, algorithmic bias, and the ethical implications of data monetization and surveillance. Addressing these requires balancing user comfort, security, and ethical responsibility (Barrett-Maitland & Lynch, 2020; Rajagopal et al., 2024).

Islamic Ethics of Social Media

The ethical use of digital and communication technologies from an Islamic perspective has been examined through various jurisprudential approaches, including fatwas on responsible digital

interaction, and ethical discussions on digital citizenship in Islam (Shuhufi et al., 2022; Musyarrofah & Zulhannan, 2023). Some research has addressed the consequences of harmful speech online through concepts like *ghibah* (backbiting), *namimah* (malicious gossip), and *tajassus* (spying), grounding their analyses in Quranic injunctions and hadith (Juliansyahzen, 2023; Nurhikma et al., 2025).

In the area of Islamic digital ethics, scholars have proposed criteria for moderation (*wasatiyyah*) in consumption, privacy protections, and algorithmic fairness. Some have examined fatwas on social media ethics, particularly rulings from entities such as the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) Fatwa No. 24 of 2017, which highlights Islamic guidelines for responsible online communication and content sharing (Harahap, 2017; Shuhufi et al., 2022). The role of intention and purposes (*niyyah*) in digital interactions has also been explored by scholars, particularly in discussions related to ethical content creation and social media use (Razali et al., 2024). Studies also highlight that engagement in social media should align with Islamic virtues such as sincerity, justice and constructive dialogue (Abdillah, 2021; Simamora & Farid, 2024).

Maqasid Shariah and al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah: Complementary Ethical Frameworks

One of the most dominant theoretical frameworks in contemporary Islamic digital ethics is Maqasid Shariah, which emphasises the preservation of essential human interests such as faith (*din*), life (*nafs*), intellect (*'aql*), lineage (*nasl*), and property (*mal*) (Harun et al., 2025; Auda, 2008). A growing body of scholarship has applied Maqasid reasoning to social media ethics, highlighting its capacity to prioritise social welfare, prevent harm, and guide ethical engagement in digital environments (Farida & Faozan, 2022; Rosidi et al., 2022).

Maqasid-based approaches have proven particularly effective in addressing issues such as misinformation and privacy violations. Scholars frequently emphasise the importance of verification (*tathabut*), ethical information sharing, and harm prevention as mechanisms for safeguarding individual and collective interests online (Aiman Noh et al., 2023; Shodiqoh, 2024). Other studies have proposed Maqasid-informed models for protecting user-generated content and mitigating digital risks, often grounding their analyses in the principle of preventing harm (*dar' al-mafsadah*) (Aliman, 2017; Khoerunnisa, 2025; Thoriquityas & Rohmawati, 2025). Similarly, Shompa et al. (2018) identify key ethical values for responsible social media use derived from expert discussions framed by Maqasid Shariah.

Despite these contributions, much of the existing literature remains confined to the broad objectives associated with the five essentials (*daruriyyat*), thereby limiting the operational depth of Maqasid reasoning. This emphasis often overlooks the internal differentiation within Maqasid Shariah, namely *Maqasid Ammah* (general objectives), *Maqasid Khassah* (specific objectives), and *Maqasid Juz'iyah* (particular objectives). As a result, the ethical guidance offered tends to remain abstract and insufficiently attuned to the granular moral decisions encountered in everyday digital practices.

While *Maqasid Juz'iyah* is sometimes treated as conceptually overlapping with *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah*, several scholars, including Abu Zayd (2015), argue that the two represent distinct modes of ethical reasoning. Maqasid reasoning articulates *what* values and interests should be preserved, whereas *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* focuses on *why* specific rulings or norms exist by uncovering the wisdom underpinning them. Both dimensions, however, remain underdeveloped in much of the Islamic digital ethics literature.

In practice, Maqasid Shariah is invaluable for setting high-level ethical priorities, particularly in safeguarding essential human interests (Auda, 2008). Yet, when applied to the micro-level decisions faced by individual social media users, such as whether to share unverified information, how to frame criticism, how much time to devote to online engagement, or what personal details to disclose, Maqasid reasoning alone often remains too general. It does not always specify how the preservation of intellect translates into a concrete obligation to verify information, nor how the protection of dignity (*'ird*) should shape the ethics of satire, humour, or public critique.

It is at this juncture that *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* functions as a complementary and refining method. By uncovering the specific wisdom underlying Islamic rulings, such as preventing harm, preserving trust, protecting privacy, and fostering honest communication, it provides a principled basis for evaluating particular digital actions and contexts. For example, the Prophetic injunction against transmitting everything one hears reflects the wisdom of safeguarding truth and social trust; when applied to social media, this *hikmah* translates into an ethical responsibility to verify information before reposting or resharing (Meerangani et al., 2025). In this way, *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* does not replace Maqasid Shariah, but rather operationalises it, translating abstract objectives into actionable ethical guidance for individual users navigating complex and rapidly evolving online environments.

Foregrounding this conceptual gap clarifies the contribution of the present study. By developing a *hikmah*-based framework that complements Maqasid reasoning, this research seeks to offer a more granular and context-sensitive approach to Islamic social media ethics, one that emphasises ethical intentionality, moral discernment, and responsible digital conduct at the level of everyday user practice.

Al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah Framework in Islamic Social Media Ethics

Although *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* occupies a relatively peripheral position within classical *usul al-fiqh* discussions (M. A. A. B. Lokman, 2025), its application to Islamic social media ethics remains largely unexplored. To date, existing scholarship on Islamic digital ethics has predominantly relied on Maqasid-based reasoning or general ethical principles, with little effort to operationalise *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* as an explicit analytical framework in this context. In this regard, the present study represents an early attempt to bridge this methodological gap.

Among contemporary works, Allumai (2024) comes closest to this orientation by employing general principles of Islamic jurisprudence to critique social-media practices such as unconstructive criticism. While his analysis implicitly reflects a concern for *hikmah*, it does not formalise *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* as a distinct method of ethical reasoning. As a result, existing studies remain limited in their ability to translate jurisprudential wisdom into systematic ethical guidance for digitally mediated behaviour.

The conceptual motivation for extending *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* into the realm of social media ethics draws, in part, from the writings of Bakar (2018), who consistently emphasises the importance of engaging the Shariah beyond its literal formulations by uncovering the deeper wisdom underpinning legal rulings. One illustrative example highlighted by Daud Bakar is the Prophet's (pbuh) refusal to purchase a camel from Abu Bakr at a discounted price, insisting instead on paying its full value. While this incident is often examined in classical jurisprudence through technical discussions of transactional permissibility, Daud Bakar draws attention to its broader ethical significance, namely, the avoidance of personal benefit or moral indebtedness arising from one's position of authority. This form of *hikmah*-oriented interpretation demonstrates how Islamic legal

narratives can yield ethical insights that extend beyond formal legality.

Such an interpretive orientation is particularly relevant for contemporary digital contexts, where many ethical challenges do not present themselves as clear legal violations but rather as practices requiring moral discernment and contextual judgment. By prioritising the wisdom underlying Islamic norms, *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* offers a promising conceptual lens for developing ethically grounded “best practices” for social media use (Nur et al., 2026). While the present study focuses specifically on individual user conduct, this framework also opens avenues for future research to explore its applicability to broader structural and technological dimensions of digital ethics.

METHOD

This study adopts a normative, qualitative research design grounded in Islamic legal theory (*usul al-fiqh*) and contemporary digital-ethics scholarship (Hakim, 2025; Harefa, 2025). Using a jurisprudential lens, the research evaluates applications of *hikmah*-based reasoning and how they can be expanded to govern emerging challenges in social media use today. The goal is not to collect empirical data but to develop a structured method for deriving ethical guidance from classical sources and applying it to modern social-media practices. To enhance methodological transparency, this study applies *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* through a structured qualitative analytical procedure:

1. Textual analysis and identification of *hikmah*: We begin by conducting a systematic reading of the Quran, Sahih hadith collections and classical juristic works to extract the underlying wisdom (*hikmah*) behind rulings on Islamic communication. The relevant Quranic verses, Prophetic traditions, and classical juristic discussions were identified based on their relevance to ethical

reasoning in Islamic communication, harm prevention, intention, and social responsibility, rather than comprehensive legal rulings alone. Following the inductive approach (*istiqrā'*) advocated by Shatibi and other legal theorists, we analyse the totality of scriptural evidence to determine the moral objectives, benefits (*maslahah*) and harms (*mafsadah*) implicit in these rulings. This stage therefore involves more than mere textual paraphrase; it requires interpretive reasoning to uncover how virtues such as honesty (*sidq*), moderation (*wasatiyyah*), dignity (*ird*) and justice (*adl*) are linked to specific actions and contexts.

2. Analysis of fatwas and contemporary scholarship: We examine contemporary fatwas and academic discussions on digital ethics to understand how modern scholars apply classical principles to issues such as misinformation, online conduct and privacy. Fatwa documents from institutions like the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) and Dar al-Ifta, as well as articles on Maqasid-based ethics, are analysed to identify where existing approaches provide clear guidance and where they remain too general. Comparing these interpretations with the *hikmah* derived in the first stage allows us to highlight the added value of *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah*: while Maqasid reasoning frames overarching objectives, *hikmah*-based analysis offers more granular insight into why specific behaviours are praised or prohibited and how those reasons can be translated into digital contexts.
3. Thematic domain mapping: Using a qualitative content-analysis framework, we organise the ethical issues identified in the literature into four domains relevant to social-media use: (a) content creation and sharing, (b) online discussions and debates, (c) time management and social-media addiction, and (d) privacy and algorithmic ethics. This mapping is informed by both Islamic sources and secular scholarship on digital communication. It

provides a structured lens through which to apply the extracted *hikmah*, ensuring that the subsequent analysis remains focused and comprehensive.

4. Application of *hikmah* through analogical reasoning: For each domain, we apply the identified *hikmah* to contemporary digital behaviours. Drawing on analogical reasoning (*qiyas*) and juristic principles of *maslahah* (public benefit) and *mafsadah* (harm), we evaluate whether specific online actions preserve or undermine the wisdom behind classical rulings. For example, the prohibition of backbiting protects dignity and social harmony; applying this *hikmah* to social-media discussions encourages respectful commenting rather than public shaming. By tracing the ethical judgement back to a clearly articulated *hikmah*, we avoid relying on mere intuition and ensure that our recommendations are anchored in Islamic legal tradition.

Table 1

Analytical Stage of Research Method

Step	Analytical Stage	Description
1	Source Identification	Qur’anic, Hadith, juristic, and fatwa texts related to digital ethics and communication are identified and collected.
2	Hikmah Extraction	Ethical wisdom (<i>hikmah</i>) underlying Islamic rulings is extracted through textual and jurisprudential analysis.
3	Thematic Mapping	Extracted <i>hikmah</i> is mapped onto key domains of social media practice and digital behavior.
4	Normative Synthesis	Ethical guidance and practical recommendations are developed across identified social media domains.

Source: Authors’ analysis.

Rationale For a Normative Conceptual Approach

A normative conceptual methodology is warranted for two reasons. First, digital communication evolves too rapidly for purely

textualist or empirical approaches to keep pace. Many online practices such as reposting rumours, engaging in satire or oversharing personal details lack direct analogues in classical jurisprudence. Normative analysis enables us to interpret these new behaviours in light of enduring ethical principles. Second, while Maqasid-based reasoning remains indispensable for highlighting the overarching aims of the Shariah, it often does not specify how those aims translate into everyday decisions (Ibrahim et al., 2018; Wahab & Mahdiya, 2025).

By uncovering the *hikmah* behind particular rulings and applying that wisdom to analogous digital actions, *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* complements Maqasid by providing context-sensitive guidance. It refines the abstract objectives of Maqasid into actionable norms for individual users without supplanting other juristic methods. This systematic application consisting of identifying *hikmah*, mapping ethical domains, and applying analogical reasoning ensures that the ethical judgments presented in the paper are transparently derived from classical sources and adapted thoughtfully to contemporary social-media contexts (Islamy, 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Understanding *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah*

In Islamic jurisprudence, *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* (reasoning through wisdom) refers to deriving normative judgments by identifying the underlying wisdom (*hikmah*) of a ruling, rather than limiting analysis to its formal legal cause (*'illah*) (al-Kamali, 2013). This approach places emphasis on the deeper intent, moral rationale, and anticipated consequences of actions, instead of assessing conduct solely through its outward attributes (*sifah*) (Nani, 2019). Building on this jurisprudential tradition, some scholars have argued that *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* may be extended beyond the sphere of positive law to evaluate the ethical significance of actions by examining their objectives,

benefits (*maslahah*), and harms (*mafsadah*) (M. A. Lokman & Ibrahim, 2017). However, while this argument establishes the conceptual plausibility of *hikmah*-based ethical reasoning, its application to contemporary digital practices, particularly social-media use, has remained largely underdeveloped in existing scholarship.

Within the context of social media, applying *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* entails evaluating digital behaviour not merely in terms of explicit prohibitions and permissions, but by examining how specific online actions realise or undermine the wisdom underlying Islamic ethical injunctions. Unlike approaches that rely primarily on broad ethical objectives, this method operates at a more granular level by tracing how the rationale behind particular norms such as truthfulness, privacy protection, or restraint in speech, extends to analogous digital practices. In this sense, *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* provides a structured means of assessing user behaviour by linking individual actions in digital spaces to the moral logic embedded in Islamic teachings.

Social media presents ethical challenges that cannot be adequately addressed through binary classifications of *halal* and *haram* alone. Many online practices such as sharing unverified information, engaging in public criticism, or excessive self-disclosure, occupy morally ambiguous spaces that require contextual and purpose-oriented evaluation. Through the application of *hikmah*, ethical reasoning is analytically grounded in Islamic values such as truthfulness, dignity, justice, and moderation. As demonstrated in the domain-based analysis that follows, these values are not invoked normatively in abstraction but are operationalised by examining how particular digital behaviours either fulfil or contradict the wisdom underlying established ethical principles. This approach complements Maqasid-based reasoning, which articulates the general objectives of the Shariah, such as the preservation of faith, life, intellect, dignity, and property (Shompa et al., 2018; Shamsuddin, 2024) by translating

those objectives into actionable ethical guidance at the level of individual conduct.

One of the central aims of employing *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* in social-media ethics is to ensure that Islamic moral guidance remains functionally responsive to evolving technological contexts without sacrificing its normative coherence. For individual users, this requires evaluating digital actions in light of their deeper ethical consequences rather than focusing solely on technical legality. Accordingly, ethical judgments are guided by considerations such as harm prevention (*dar' al-mafsadah*), justice (*adl*), accountability (*mas'uliyah*), and moral character (*khuluqiyyah*) (Sahil, 2024). By foregrounding the wisdom behind ethical injunctions, *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* enables a context-sensitive yet principled framework for navigating everyday moral decisions in contemporary digital environments.

Operationalising *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* in Social Media Ethics

Content Creation and Sharing

Using *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah*, ethical evaluation of social-media content moves beyond identifying formal prohibitions to examining the underlying wisdom that Islamic rulings seek to realise or protect. Rather than treating truthfulness, privacy, or respectful speech as abstract virtues, this approach analyses how the *hikmah* behind these norms extends to specific digital practices undertaken by individual users.

Truthfulness, Verification, and Misinformation

One of the most prominent ethical challenges in social media is the rapid spread of misinformation, exaggerated claims, and misleading content, often shared impulsively without verification. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) warned: "It is enough for a person to be considered a liar if he narrates everything he hears" (Sahih Muslim, 2007,

Hadith 4). Classical jurists understood this prohibition not merely as a formal ban on lying, but as grounded in the *hikmah* of preserving public trust and preventing social harm. Through *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah*, this wisdom is identified as the operative moral rationale (*manat al-hikmah*) behind the ruling.

When applied to social-media use, this *hikmah* requires users to assess content not only for factual accuracy but also for its potential consequences. The Quran instructs believers to verify information: “O you who have believed, if a corrupt person brings you news, investigate it, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become regretful for what you have done” (*The Qur'an*, 2008, 49:6). Here, verification (*tathabut*) is not an end in itself; rather, it serves the wisdom of harm prevention (*dar' al-mafsadah*). From a *hikmah*-based perspective, truthfulness (*sidq*) therefore encompasses responsible communication, ensuring that the dissemination of information does not undermine trust, create confusion, or expose others to harm (Shodiqoh, 2024).

This distinction clarifies how *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* differs from general ethical reasoning. Even when a piece of content is technically accurate, its circulation may contradict the *hikmah* of truthfulness if it generates disproportionate fear, social division, or moral panic. In such cases, the ethical evaluation is not derived from the truth-value alone but from assessing whether the action fulfils or frustrates the wisdom behind the norm.

To illustrate this application, consider the circulation of misleading claims about COVID-19 vaccinations. This example functions not as an empirical case study, but as a hypothetical application of the framework. A claim may contain partial truths yet still erode public trust, amplify fear, or discourage life-saving measures. Through *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah*, such content is ethically evaluated by weighing its foreseeable impact on public welfare against the wisdom of preserving trust and preventing harm. Thus,

the prohibition arises not simply because the claim is false, but because its dissemination violates the *hikmah* underlying truthfulness by producing *mafsadah* that outweighs any perceived benefit (Farida & Faozan, 2022).

Accordingly, users are ethically obliged to verify information before reposting and to refrain from sharing content that, while not an outright lie, is likely to cause unnecessary fear, confusion, or social discord (Shodiqoh, 2024). Similarly, content creators should avoid sensationalised headlines and clickbait practices that exploit attention while misleading audiences, as such strategies conflict with the *hikmah* of sincerity (*ikhlas*) and integrity in communication (Abdillah, 2021).

Ethical Humour, Satire, and Mockery

Another recurring issue in content creation involves humour, satire, and sarcastic expression that targets individuals or groups. The Quran explicitly cautions against ridicule: “O you who have believed, let not a people ridicule another people; perhaps they may be better than them” (The Qur’an, 2008, 49:11). Juristically, this prohibition is grounded in the *hikmah* of protecting human dignity (*ird*) and preserving social harmony.

Through *al-Ta’lil bi al-Hikmah*, satire is not judged solely by intent or genre but by whether it fulfils the wisdom of ethical speech. Humour that offers constructive criticism or social reflection may be permissible, whereas content that humiliates, normalises disrespect, or erodes moral sensibilities contradicts the *hikmah* behind the prohibition of mockery (*istihza*). This evaluation applies universally, though its manifestations may vary across cultural contexts.

For example, videos portraying spousal disrespect for entertainment purposes, regardless of cultural setting, raise ethical concerns because they risk trivialising harm to dignity and normalising relational injustice. The ethical issue here is not cultural specificity but the violation of the underlying *hikmah*: safeguarding

respect, preventing moral desensitisation, and maintaining healthy social norms. Consequently, content creators and users alike bear responsibility to ensure that humour uplifts rather than degrades, aligning digital expression with the wisdom embedded in Islamic ethical teachings.

Time Management and Social Media Addiction

Purpose, Moderation, and Ethical Use of Time

Beyond communicative ethics, *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* plays a crucial role in evaluating patterns of social-media consumption, particularly in relation to excessive use and digital addiction. Islamic ethics does not merely discourage excess as a behavioural fault, but grounds this prohibition in the *hikmah* of preserving time as a moral trust (*amanah*) entrusted to human beings. Time, in Islamic thought, is not a neutral resource but a meaningful asset oriented toward worship, personal development, and social responsibility. Accordingly, activities that erode this orientation without commensurate benefit contradict the wisdom underlying ethical guidance on moderation (*wasatiyyah*) (Shamsuddin, 2024).

The Quranic condemnation of wastefulness, “Do not waste extravagantly; indeed, the extravagant are brothers of the devils” (*The Qur'an*, 2008, 17:26-27), has traditionally been interpreted not only in material terms but also in relation to the misuse of non-material resources, including time and attention. Through *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah*, the operative wisdom behind this injunction can be identified as safeguarding human purposefulness and preventing behaviours that divert individuals from meaningful engagement. In this sense, excessive social-media use is ethically problematic not simply because it consumes time, but because it often lacks clear intention and objective, resulting in diminished focus, spiritual neglect, and erosion of self-discipline.

Recent empirical studies on Islamic digital ethics support this normative concern by documenting the consequences of unregulated social-media consumption. Research indicates that prolonged engagement, particularly on platforms designed to maximise user attention, correlates with mental fatigue, reduced offline interaction, and diminished spiritual awareness (Chowdhury, 2024). While such findings are empirical in nature, they serve within this study as *contextual indicators* that reinforce the normative *hikmah* of moderation, rather than as independent ethical justifications. That is, empirical evidence illustrates the harms that Islamic ethical reasoning already seeks to prevent through its emphasis on purposeful living and balanced conduct.

From a *hikmah*-based perspective, the ethical issue lies not merely in the duration of social-media use but in the absence of intention and objective. Studies by Aiman Noh et al. (2023) and Razali et al. (2024) highlight that Islamic ethical engagement with social media is fundamentally purpose-driven: platforms may be used for education, knowledge-sharing, dakwah, professional networking, or constructive discourse, provided that such use is guided by conscious intention (*niyyah*) and clear benefit. Mindless scrolling, by contrast, reflects a disconnection between action and purpose, which directly contradicts the *hikmah* underlying ethical guidance on time management.

Accordingly, *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* reframes digital self-regulation as an ethical discipline rooted in mindfulness and intentionality. Users are encouraged to critically assess not only how long they engage with social media, but *why* they do so. When online activity enhances knowledge, moral awareness, or social good, it aligns with the wisdom of moderation; when it devolves into habitual, purposeless consumption, it undermines that wisdom and becomes ethically blameworthy (Aliman, 2017; Harahap, 2017). Practical measures such

as screen-time controls and scheduled usage are therefore not merely technical tools, but ethical instruments that support intentional engagement.

The Qur'anic reminder "By time, indeed mankind is in loss, except for those who believe, perform righteous deeds, and counsel one another to truth and patience" (The Qur'an, 2008, 103:1-3) encapsulates this ethical orientation. Time is framed as a criterion of moral success or failure, contingent upon purposeful action. Within this framework, regulating social-media use is not about rejecting digital participation altogether, but about restoring intentionality and balance. By aligning online engagement with clear objectives and ethical purpose, users can resist addictive patterns and ensure that their digital practices remain consistent with the hikmah of meaningful and disciplined living.

Privacy and Algorithmic Ethics

Privacy, Data Exposure, and Ethical Self-Restraint

Issues of privacy and personal data exposure further demonstrate the relevance of *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* in shaping ethical digital behaviour. In Islamic moral thought, privacy (*sitr*) is not merely a social preference but a protected ethical value rooted in the preservation of dignity (*hifz al-'ird*) and personal security. The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) stated: "Whoever conceals the faults of a fellow Muslim, Allah will conceal his faults on the Day of Judgment" (*Sahih Muslim*, 2007, Hadith 2590), indicating that concealment serves the wisdom of protecting individuals from harm, humiliation, and exploitation.

From the perspective of *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah*, the prohibition against unnecessary exposure is grounded in the prevention of foreseeable harm (*dar' al-mafsadah*). This wisdom is further reflected in Quranic guidance on privacy, such as the command not to enter

others' homes without permission (*The Qur'an*, 2008, 24:27), which jurists have understood as safeguarding individuals from intrusion, judgment, and vulnerability. When extended to social-media practices, this *hikmah* requires users to exercise restraint in sharing personal information, such as location data, financial details, or private conversations, since such exposure increases the risk of surveillance, identity theft, and reputational damage (Harahap, 2017).

Within this framework, ethical concern regarding algorithm-driven data collection is not inferred loosely, but derived through *hikmah*-based reasoning supported by established legal maxims (*qawa'id fiqhiyyah*). The maxim *la darar wa la dirar* (no harm and no reciprocating harm) provides a normative basis for questioning practices that expose users to systematic harm through data exploitation, behavioural profiling, or manipulative advertising. Similarly, *al-umur bi maqasidiha* (matters are judged by their intention) invites ethical scrutiny of technologies whose primary objective is profit maximisation through the commodification of personal identity. From this angle, Islamic ethics does not oppose technology per se, but evaluates its use according to the wisdom of harm prevention, dignity protection, and moral accountability (Aliman, 2017).

Accordingly, applying *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* to social-media use directs individual users toward selective and purposeful disclosure. Given that most platforms track, store, and monetise user data and often without full transparency or informed consent (Bhargava & Velasquez, 2020), ethical digital engagement requires conscious limitation of personal exposure while prioritising the sharing of beneficial public knowledge. This approach aligns with the *hikmah* of balancing openness with self-protection, ensuring that online participation upholds both ethical responsibility and personal security (Sahil, 2024).

Algorithmic Influence and Ethical Awareness

Beyond privacy, algorithmic curation presents ethical challenges that affect how users encounter information and form worldviews. Algorithms often prioritise engagement-driven content, creating ideological echo chambers and amplifying emotionally charged or polarising material. From a *hikmah*-based perspective, this phenomenon intersects with the values of justice (*adl*) and balance (*wasatiyyah*), both of which aim to prevent distortion, excess, and social fragmentation. While most Islamic media-ethics discussions focus on user conduct, recognising algorithmic influence is essential for ethically informed user agency (Rosidi et al., 2022).

Here, *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* does not immediately assign legal culpability to individual users for structural biases, but it does impose an ethical responsibility of awareness and self-regulation. Users are encouraged to diversify information sources, critically evaluate curated content, and avoid unreflective consumption that reinforces confirmation bias (Shamsuddin, 2024). This obligation follows from the wisdom underlying *tathabut* (verification) and intellectual integrity, ensuring that moral judgement is not surrendered to automated systems.

In this light, calls to critique exploitative algorithms should be understood primarily as ethical obligations of awareness and moral positioning, rather than as direct legal mandates or policy prescriptions. A *hikmah*-oriented approach encourages Muslims to question technologies that systematically privilege harm, deception, or excess and to support ethical alternatives or regulatory measures that align digital environments with justice, transparency, and social well-being (Wati, 2023). Such advocacy represents a moral ideal grounded in Islamic ethical reasoning, complementing the user-centred focus of this study without extending into a full analysis of platform governance.

CONCLUSION

This study has sought to articulate a normative framework for Islamic social media ethics through the application of *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah*. Rather than approaching digital behaviour through fixed legal classifications alone, the study demonstrates how wisdom-based jurisprudential reasoning enables ethical evaluation that is attentive to purpose, intention, and foreseeable consequences. By situating *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* within the broader objectives of the Shariah, the analysis shows how Islamic ethical reasoning can remain context-sensitive and morally responsive in digitally mediated environments.

The study's primary contribution lies in its systematic operationalisation of *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* at the level of individual user conduct. Through domain-based analysis, covering content creation, online discourse, time management, and privacy, the paper demonstrates how ethical judgments can be derived by tracing specific digital practices back to the wisdom underlying established Islamic norms. In doing so, the study refines existing Maqasid-based approaches by translating general objectives into actionable ethical guidance at the *juz'iy* (micro-ethical) level.

As a normative inquiry, this study does not claim empirical validation of user behaviour or platform outcomes. Its conclusions are therefore bounded by its conceptual scope and focus on individual moral agency rather than institutional or regulatory frameworks. Structural issues such as algorithmic governance and corporate accountability are acknowledged as ethically significant but are not examined in depth, as doing so would require a separate analytical framework and extended methodological treatment.

Despite these limitations, the proposed framework carries practical implications. For Muslim social media users, it offers an ethics of intentionality, encouraging mindful engagement guided by truthfulness, moderation, dignity, privacy, and accountability. For

educators and community leaders, the framework provides a conceptual basis for developing digital literacy initiatives grounded in Islamic ethical reasoning. Islamic legal institutions and fatwa bodies may also find value in *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* as a complementary tool for addressing emerging digital practices where explicit precedents are lacking.

Future research may extend this framework in several directions. Empirical studies could examine how Muslim users interpret and apply *hikmah*-based ethical reasoning in everyday digital practices. Further conceptual work may also explore the application of *al-Ta'lil bi al-Hikmah* to systemic issues such as platform governance, algorithmic justice, and digital regulation. By establishing a user-centred foundation, this study aims to contribute to a broader and more nuanced Islamic ethical discourse on technology in the digital age.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization: M.A.A.L, M.S.H & S.S.S; Data curation: M.A.A.L, M.M.N & S.S.S; Formal analysis: M.A.A.L, M.M.N, N.S.M.N, S.S.S & M.S.H; Funding acquisition: M.A.A.L, M.M.N & S.S.S; Investigation: M.A.A.L, M.M.N, N.S.M.N & S.S.S; Methodology: M.A.A.L, M.S.H & S.K; Project administration: M.A.A.L, M.M.N & S.S.S; Resources: M.A.A.L, M.M.N & S.S.S; Software: M.A.A.L, M.M.N & S.S.S; Supervision: M.A.A.L, M.M.N & S.S.S; Validation: M.A.A.L, M.M.N & S.S.S; Visualization: M.A.A.L, N.S.M.N & S.K; Writing-original draft: M.A.A.L, M.M.N & M.S.H; Writing-review & editing: M.A.A.L, M.M.N, N.S.M.N, S.S.S, M.S.H & S.K; All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available upon request from the corresponding author.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

During the preparation of this work, the authors used ChatGPT and PaperPal to improve the clarity of the language and readability of the article. After using these tools, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and took full responsibility for the content of the published article.

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