

| Research Article |

Online Taaruf from the Perspective of Maqashid Syari'ah: A Case Study of an Instagram-Based Taaruf Platform in Birobuli Selatan, Palu Selatan District

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Received: 2026-09-10 / Accepted: 2026-09-20 / Published: 2026-09-30

Abstract: Digital communication has moved the search for a marriage partner onto social media, and Indonesian Muslims now conduct *taaruf* through Instagram and dedicated platforms, a practice whose conformity with Islamic law remains contested. This study examines the concept of online *taaruf* on Instagram, the understanding of that practice held by the people of Birobuli Selatan in Palu Selatan District, and the standing of the practice from the perspective of *maqashid syari'ah*. A descriptive qualitative case study was applied. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews with seven informants, five of them community members who have undertaken or are undertaking online *taaruf*, the others a religious figure and a marriage counsellor at the Office of Religious Affairs. Two findings emerge. First, online *taaruf* in Birobuli Selatan is a process of introduction leading to marriage that begins on Instagram and continues within an application or a supervised communication group, moving through the exchange of biodata, question-and-answer sessions, *nadzor*, *khitbah*, and the marriage contract. The community distinguishes it firmly from dating and emphasises *adab*, openness, and third-party supervision while remaining alert to fraud and false identities. Second, the practice supports the five principal objectives of the sharia, namely *hifz al-din*, *hifz al-nafs*, *hifz al-'aql*, *hifz al-nasl*, and *hifz al-mal*, and carries an original ruling of *mubah*. Fulfilment of those objectives is not automatic. It rests on the method, the honesty, and the supervision applied, so that social media operates as a neutral instrument whose legal assessment follows the manner of its use.

Keywords: online *taaruf*, Instagram, *maqashid syari'ah*, Islamic family law, Birobuli Selatan



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Introduction

In Islamic marriage, the process of becoming acquainted is commonly referred to as *taaruf*. *Taaruf* is understood as getting to know a prospective spouse in order to learn more about that person. In other words, *taaruf*, together with *khitbah* or the proposal, is the manner of approach between a man and a woman who intend to marry. In its broad sense, therefore, *taaruf* means becoming acquainted, whereas in its narrow sense it refers to marriage itself (Hana, 2012).

Taaruf is a sound way for a man and a woman who wish to marry to become acquainted with one another. In everyday social life, however, the process is rarely encountered, because it is not widely known and is seldom practised, even though it is the *syar'i* method and accords with Islamic teaching. It has now been made easier by the emergence of *taaruf* applications, which is notable given that *taaruf* is available on the web, or online (Ngapriba, 2020).

The contemporary *taaruf* process is a social consequence of technology, which has made communication easier, more effective, and more solution-oriented, and which has opened opportunities for individuals to seek a partner without the constraints of distance, space, or time. Thahir Ibnu 'Asyur states that the social consequences of technology and communication are marked by changes in relations between individuals, between individuals and communities, between individuals and social institutions, between individuals and the mass media, and even between states, once the benefits of technology and communication have been experienced. Increasingly sophisticated communication technology allows individuals in the digital era to obtain, convey, and exchange information without limits of distance or time. This same factor leads individuals to spend more of their time with the products of communication technology. Internet use in Indonesia continues to rise, which indicates ever wider public access to digital technology, and the internet penetration rate in Indonesia in 2026 stood at 81.22% (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia, 2026). In line with this, the number of social media user identities in Indonesia has reached approximately 180 million, equivalent to 62.9% of the total Indonesian population, a figure that also represents growth of 26% over the previous year and indicates the strengthening position of social media in Indonesian life (We Are Social, 2025).

These conditions influence the way people build communication and interpersonal relationships, including the search for a life partner. Social media, used initially for communication, information sharing, and social networking, has also become a space in which individuals introduce themselves and find a prospective spouse. Within Muslim society, this development has given rise to the practice of online *taaruf*, a process in which a man and a woman become acquainted using digital media as the initial means of communication before marriage. The phenomenon merits examination because the use of digital media in *taaruf* concerns not only ease of communication but also the boundaries of the sharia and the benefit the process is intended to produce. *Taaruf* functions as a means of communication through which

prospective spouses come to know one another before marriage, so as to prevent circumstances that may provoke conflict and regret afterwards (Fathorrahman & Zulhaqqi, 2020).

The *taaruf* process has been known since the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Traced further back, the history of *taaruf* begins in the Prophet's era (Ilhami, 2019). The Prophet, however, did not specify the manner or the steps of *taaruf*. *Taaruf* has been known since the revelation of Q.S. Al-Hujurat verse 13, which sets out the command that tribes and nations, men and women alike, should come to know one another. As time has passed, the rapid development of information technology has made communication easier and has allowed the *taaruf* process to be conducted through social media platforms such as Instagram, which has shifted the sense of sanctity attached to the process (Hildawati & Lestari, 2019). *Taaruf* is widely misunderstood among young people, who treat it as a form of Islamic dating and therefore feel secure in such a relationship. This assumption has hardened into the view that *taaruf* is dating and dating is *taaruf*, although the two are entirely different. Most commonly, they understand *taaruf* as reserved for a particular group, namely those who already possess an understanding of Islam (Sodiq, 2017).

The Qur'an and the hadith state that *zina* is a major sin in Islam and is forbidden by Allah the Almighty.

وَلَا تَقْرُبُوا الزَّانِيَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا

“And do not approach *zina*; it is truly a repugnant act and an evil way.” (Q.S. Al-Isra' [17]: 32, as rendered in Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2016)

In his well-known work *Al-Halal wal Haram fil Islam*, Al-Qaradawi (2001) does not address online *taaruf* specifically, yet he sets out a general principle governing interaction between men and women. Islam does not forbid a man from becoming acquainted with his prospective wife before marriage, provided that this takes place within the corridor of the sharia, that is, not through unrestricted dating but through a process that preserves honour and Islamic *adab*.

The search for a spouse through online media is a social reality that has expanded rapidly alongside advances in information and communication technology. In recent years, Indonesian Muslims have begun to use a range of digital application platforms to conduct *taaruf*, that is, an introduction undertaken in order to find a life partner in a manner consistent with Islamic values and principles. Among the social media platforms reasonably well known in Central Sulawesi, and particularly in Palu Selatan District, Birobuli Selatan Sub-district, are the applications “Taaruf Lalu Nikah”, “Half of Deen”, and “MenikahSalafih”. These platforms serve as an alternative medium regarded as easing the *taaruf* process while preserving *syar'i* principles in interaction between men and women.

Beyond the advance of technology itself, one reason for using these platforms is to avoid dating practices considered inconsistent with Islamic law, so that online *taaruf* is regarded as the more *syar'i* solution. The consequences of using these

platforms may be examined through *maqashid syari'ah*, namely *hifz al-din*, *hifz al-nafs*, *hifz al-'aql*, *hifz al-nasl*, and *hifz al-mal*.

Existing scholarship has established that *taaruf* has moved onto digital platforms and that the shift carries both benefit and risk (Elysia et al., 2021; Fathorrahman & Zulhaqqi, 2020; Nugroho, 2021). What has received less attention is how that shift is understood and practised by an ordinary Muslim community outside the large urban centres, and how the resulting practice stands when measured against the five objectives of the sharia. This research therefore seeks to examine more closely how Islamic law views the search for a spouse through online applications, and particularly from the perspective of *maqashid syari'ah*. In Islam, the path towards marriage is not merely a matter of introduction. It also concerns purity of intention, the validity of communication between a man and a woman, and the foundation of a lawful contract. It is therefore important to trace whether the process that takes place within these applications accords with the principles of Islamic law or departs from the guidance of the sharia.

Method

The research applies a descriptive qualitative method. In this study, accordingly, the researcher seeks to describe the condition of the object under study on the basis of material gathered in the field. The type adopted is the case study, one form of research falling within the qualitative category. A case study is a series of scholarly activities conducted intensively, in detail, and in depth on a programme, an event, or an activity, whether at the level of an individual, a group, an institution, or an organisation, in order to obtain deep knowledge of that activity (Rusandi & Rusli, n.d.).

A case is an occurrence or event that may be very simple or highly complex. The case study is a research strategy in which the researcher investigates with care a programme, an event, an activity, a process, or a group of individuals. Cases are bounded by time and activity, and the researcher collects complete information using various data collection procedures within a predetermined period. The research subject may be an individual, a group, an institution, or a community (Kusumastuti & Khoiron, 2019).

The research was conducted in Birobuli Selatan, Palu Selatan District, Central Sulawesi. Data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with seven informants selected purposively. Five are community members who have completed or are currently undertaking online *taaruf* through Instagram and related platforms, and two are informants with authority in religious matters, namely a religious figure and a marriage counsellor at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA). The interviews explored the stages of the *taaruf* process, the reasons for choosing digital media, the perceived benefits and risks, and the informants' reading of the practice against Islamic law. Interview material was supplemented by observation of the content and rules of the *taaruf* accounts and applications named by the informants,

together with documentation drawn from the platforms themselves. Analysis proceeded through reduction of the interview material, presentation of the data by theme, and the drawing of conclusions, after which the findings were read against the five objectives of *maqashid syari'ah* in the framework of al-Syatibi and Auda.

Result and Discussion

The Concept of Online Taaruf on Instagram and Public Understanding of the Practice in Birobuli Selatan

The interviews show that Instagram in Birobuli Selatan does not function as the sole venue for *taaruf*, but rather as the gateway that brings prospective spouses together before the process moves to an application or a dedicated *taaruf* communication group supervised by an intermediary. The informant Hernia, S.Ag., stated that people in Palu, and young people in particular, are increasingly accustomed to using social media for various purposes, including the search for a life partner, since it is regarded as more practical and able to reach a larger number of candidates. The informant Eka Saputri likewise reported that she came to know *taaruf* through Instagram after learning that the platform serves a further function as a means of finding a partner for those who intend to marry.

This finding is consistent with Nugroho (2021), who shows that online *taaruf* platforms in Indonesia such as Rumah Taaruf MyQur'an and Mawaddah Indonesia have emerged as a representation of the shift in religious practice from offline to online settings, with internet technology as the principal attraction drawing large numbers of members. The shift is also confirmed by Elysia et al. (2021), who hold that the digital era has transformed the meaning and practice of *taaruf*, with social media as one of its channels, so that the function of Instagram as an initial intermediary in the present study may be understood as part of a broader national phenomenon of *taaruf* transformation.

According to the informant Diana Bayuaningtias, online *taaruf* generally follows a reasonably structured sequence: examining one another's curriculum vitae within the application, a question-and-answer session in a communication group supervised by around three facilitators from the application, *nadzor* or a face-to-face meeting to see the prospective spouse more clearly, *khitbah*, and the marriage contract. This tiered structure is intended to keep the process of acquaintance within *syar'i* limits and aligned with its original purpose, namely marriage.

This tiered structure accords with the understanding of *taaruf* advanced by Kamaluddin (2022), who holds that the construction of the meaning of *taaruf* in the Qur'an emphasises a process of mutual acquaintance aimed at building social harmony rather than an encounter without clear direction or limits. Musthofa and Laily (2022) caution, however, that online *taaruf* may contain an element of *gharar*, or uncertainty, where these stages are not supervised by an appropriate party, as found in the case of *taaruf* through the Muzz application and its effect on the durability of the contract. The sequence of stages is therefore not a mere formality but a risk-

mitigation mechanism that distinguishes safe online *taaruf* from the kind that is vulnerable to problems.

All informants consistently understand online *taaruf* as a process fundamentally different from dating. The informant Hernia stated that *taaruf* is not 'syar'i dating' but a process of introduction that preserves *adab* and the limits of social interaction and that involves a trusted party as facilitator. A similar understanding was conveyed by Ustaz Abdul Haris, S.Th.I., who stated that Islam regards *taaruf* as a legitimate way for prospective spouses to become acquainted before marriage, with emphasis on the etiquette of communication and on the avoidance of virtual *khalwat*.

This understanding accords with the findings of Najmi et al. (2026), who examine the phenomenon of online *taaruf* from the perspective of Islamic law together with its positive and negative effects on users of partner-search applications, and who identify clarity of intention and *syar'i* limits as the principal factors distinguishing sound online *taaruf* from practice liable to drift towards a dating relationship. The understanding of online *taaruf* held in Birobuli Selatan therefore does not differ significantly from that found in other regions of Indonesia as recorded in the literature.

As to benefits, the informant Miftahul Rahma explained that online *taaruf* helped her avoid *ikhtilat* with a non-*mahram*, prevented the growth of feelings before the marriage contract, and provided room to ask questions openly without embarrassment through an honest question-and-answer system. The informant Sri Muliyani, S.Pd., further stated that the *taaruf* process gave her a sense of security because it proceeded according to platform rules aligned with sharia principles, and that it strengthened her confidence in the religious foundation of her prospective spouse as the basis for forming a *sakinah* family.

This finding indicates a change in patterns of social interaction brought about by the development of information technology. Where *taaruf* was formerly conducted largely through family, religious figures, or the immediate social environment, in the digital era people have begun to use social media and online platforms as the means of finding a life partner. That change represents an adaptation to technological development, yet it does not alter the principal purpose of *taaruf* as a process leading to a lawful marriage.

From the perspective of digital communication, social media is a space of interaction that allows individuals to build relationships unconstrained by space and time. This study shows, however, that the informants do not treat digital media as the sole source of information about a prospective spouse. The first informant explained that a person's character cannot be known in full through online communication alone, so that verification with family, close friends, or others who know the candidate directly is required. The final decision, moreover, continues to rest on family deliberation and the *istikharah* prayer.

Online *taaruf* is a mechanism of introduction between prospective spouses that uses digital media such as Instagram, WhatsApp, Telegram, or dedicated *taaruf* platforms while upholding the principles of Islamic law. The information obtained

indicates that although the medium has become digital, the stages of *taaruf* remain directed towards marriage and towards avoiding the practice of dating. The digitalisation of *taaruf* offers ease in bringing together candidates separated by distance, yet it also raises new challenges. Informants were critical of the emergence of the commodification of marriage, that is, where *taaruf* platforms foreground marketing, Islamic branding, or economic gain rather than the essence of *taaruf* as a search for a life partner with whom to build a *sakinah* family. The success of online *taaruf* therefore depends not only on the use of technology but also on the integrity of platform managers, the involvement of mediators, and the commitment of participants to sharia values throughout the process. Fathorrahman and Zulhaqqi (2020) explain that online *taaruf* is a form of Muslim adaptation to digital technological development. They hold that digital media can bring ease to the search for a partner but also opens the way to the commodification of relationships where it is not accompanied by supervisory mechanisms and sharia values.

Digital technological development has brought significant change to *taaruf* practice among Muslims. Although the principal aim of *taaruf* remains the same, namely to find a life partner in accordance with Islamic teaching, the mechanism of its implementation has been transformed by the arrival of social media and various digital platforms. A process formerly conducted through intermediaries such as family, a *murabbi*, or religious figures can now be carried out through applications and social media, so that communication has become faster, easier, and wider in reach. Elysia et al. (2021) state that the meaning of *taaruf* has been transformed in the digital era. Where *taaruf* was once synonymous with a direct meeting arranged through family or religious figures, the process can now be conducted through digital media without losing its principal aim of marriage. This study, however, contributes the new finding that the success of that transformation is strongly influenced by the systems of supervision, identity verification, and communication limits applied by the platform.

That view is reinforced by Sodiq (2017), who explains that the essence of *taaruf* is not merely mutual acquaintance but a *syar'i* endeavour to obtain a life partner capable of building a *sakinah* family. Whatever medium is used is therefore not at issue, so long as the limits of the sharia are preserved and the process does not lead to *khulwah*, unnecessary *ikhtilat*, or a forbidden relationship.

Within Islamic law, this accords with the following legal maxim:

الأَصْلُ فِي الْمَعَامَلَاتِ الْإِبَاحَةُ حَتَّى يَدُلُّ الدَّلِيلُ عَلَى التَّحْرِيمِ

“The original ruling in *muamalah* is permissibility until evidence indicates prohibition” (Djazuli, 2016).

On the basis of this maxim, the use of social media as a means of *taaruf* is in principle permitted, because the medium is merely an instrument. Its legal assessment depends on the purpose for which it is used and on the manner of its use. This view was also affirmed by the religious figures who served as informants, who stated that

using social media to find a life partner is *mubah* so long as it involves no element of sin, deception, pornography, or violation of Islamic law.

Online *taaruf* through social media or digital platforms is a form of contemporary *muamalah* unknown in the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Since no text of the Qur'an or the hadith specifically prohibits the use of digital media as a means of finding a life partner, the maxim above establishes that the original ruling on such use is *mubah*, that is, permitted. What Islam assesses is not the medium but the manner of its use. Social media is merely an instrument, a *wasilah*, while the ruling on its use depends on whether the manner concerned accords with or contradicts the sharia.

It may be concluded that online *taaruf* through social media is in principle permitted as a form of innovation in *muamalah*, since no evidence prohibits the use of technology as a means of finding a life partner. That permissibility is conditional, however, in that the practice of online *taaruf* must continue to comply with the provisions of the sharia and must realise the objectives of *maqashid syari'ah* (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1995). The analytical focus of this research therefore falls not on whether social media is lawful or unlawful but on whether the online *taaruf* practised by the community preserves sharia values and produces the benefit at which Islamic law aims.

The marriage counsellor at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), for his part, stressed that social media is merely a means of communication. What determines whether online *taaruf* accords with the sharia is the manner of its use. Where communication is courteous, honest, and transparent and continues to involve family or a facilitator, social media can be a sound alternative for contemporary society. Where communication proceeds without supervision and disregards Islamic values, by contrast, the risk of deviation grows.

These results indicate that people have begun to accept online *taaruf* as part of the development of information technology. That acceptance is conditional, in that the process must continue to preserve religious values, involve a facilitator, place honesty first, and remain oriented towards marriage. Digital media is thus understood as an instrument that eases the search for a partner rather than a substitute for the sharia principles on which *taaruf* rests. Online *taaruf* is a form of social *ijtihad* in response to the development of communication technology. The transformation from conventional *taaruf* to *taaruf* based on digital media is not a change in the substance of Islamic teaching but a change in the means employed. The existence of platforms such as Taaruf Lalu Nikah therefore shows that technology can serve both as a medium of *dakwah* and as a medium for forming families in accordance with the sharia, provided that it is managed professionally, transparently, and with an orientation towards the common good.

Online Taaruf Examined from the Perspective of Maqashid Syari'ah

Maqashid syari'ah is the concept that explains the principal purpose for which Islamic law was ordained, namely to realise benefit (*jalb al-masalih*) and to prevent

harm (*dar'u al-mafasid*). According to al-Syatibi, all provisions of the sharia are in essence directed at preserving the framework of the five principal objectives of the sharia (*al-kulliyat al-khams*), namely religion (*hifz al-din*), life (*hifz al-nafs*), the intellect (*hifz al-'aql*), lineage (*hifz al-nasl*), and property (*hifz al-mal*) (Al-Syatibi, n.d., pp. 6–8; Al-Zuhaili, 1986, p. 1017). In this study, the practice of online *taaruf* is analysed against these five objectives in order to establish the extent to which the use of social media as a means of finding a partner realises benefit for the community.

The findings show that all informants share the view that using social media as a means of *taaruf* is not something Islam prohibits. The measure is not the medium used but the process and the mechanism of its implementation. The second informant stated that fulfilment of the objectives of *maqashid syari'ah* depends heavily on the method employed. In her account, experience with several *taaruf* media showed that platforms with a system of supervision and clear rules of communication were far better able to preserve the objectives of the sharia than methods involving no third party.

That view is reinforced by the KUA marriage counsellor, who stated that online media is merely a means. So long as *taaruf* is conducted according to Islamic principles, such as preserving the etiquette of communication, avoiding deception, involving family or a facilitator, and remaining oriented towards marriage, the practice can support the attainment of the objectives of *maqashid syari'ah*.

The findings of this study indicate that online *taaruf* cannot be assessed by reference to the medium alone but must be analysed according to its effect on the welfare of those involved. The discussion that follows therefore sets out the practice of online *taaruf* against the five principal objectives of *maqashid syari'ah*.

***Hifz al-Din* (Preservation of Religion)**

The first aspect of *maqashid syari'ah* is the preservation of religion (*hifz al-din*). In the context of online *taaruf*, preserving religion means ensuring that the search for a partner is conducted in accordance with the provisions of Islamic law and is thus free of prohibited conduct such as *khulwah*, unguarded *ikhtilat*, dating, or communication that leads to sin.

The informant Hernia, S.Ag., explained explicitly that, from the aspect of *hifz al-din*, online *taaruf* helps a person avoid relationships inconsistent with the sharia while also serving as an endeavour towards a marriage intended as an act of worship. This view is reinforced by Ustaz Abdul Haris, who stated that, under the legal maxims of fiqh, the original ruling on the use of social media is *mubah*, provided that it is used for lawful purposes and involves no element of sin.

This analysis is consistent with Supriadi and Hermawan (2021), who apply Jamaluddin Athiyyah's concept of *maqashid syari'ah* in response to the social phenomenon of online *taaruf* and conclude that the use of digital media in *taaruf* can be justified in *syar'i* terms so long as it remains within the corridor of preserving the purity of the religious objective, namely a lawful marriage free of any element of sin.

The findings show that all informants regard online *taaruf* as an alternative that can help a person preserve religious values. The first informant explained that the principal reason for choosing online *taaruf* was to avoid *ikhtilat*, to guard against emotional attachment before the marriage contract, and to undergo a process supervised by a mediator so that communication remains within the limits of the sharia.

The second informant likewise stated that the use of a platform with a system of supervision is the principal factor distinguishing *syar'i taaruf* from unrestricted communication through social media. In her account, without a facilitator, two-way communication between a man and a woman may lead to a relationship resembling dating, so that the original purpose of *taaruf* is not attained. That view accords with the explanation of religious figures, who stated that social media is in essence merely a tool of communication. Islam does not prohibit the use of technology so long as it serves a good purpose and does not contradict the sharia. The use of social media as a means of *taaruf* can therefore be justified where *adab* and personal honour are preserved and where family or a mediator is involved as required.

Analysed through the theory of al-Syatibi, the practice shows an effort to preserve religion through the responsible use of technology. This also accords with the approach of Auda (2008), who holds that *maqashid syari'ah* must be understood dynamically, so that modern technology may be used where it supports the realisation of benefit and does not contradict the objectives of the sharia. The researcher therefore holds that online *taaruf* on the Taaruf Lalu Nikah platform reflects the implementation of *hifz al-din*. This is evident in the limits placed on communication, the supervision provided by administrators, the involvement of family, and a clear orientation towards marriage, all of which keep the search for a partner within the corridor of Islamic teaching.

Hifz al-Nafs (Preservation of Life)

The second objective of *maqashid syari'ah* is the preservation of life (*hifz al-nafs*). In this study, preserving life is understood as the effort to provide a sense of security and psychological protection and to minimise risks that may harm participants during the *taaruf* process.

The interviews show that the first informant regarded the presence of administrators and a system of supervision as a source of security during the *taaruf* process. Communication conducted in stages allowed her to become acquainted with a prospective spouse without pressure to marry quickly. Before reaching a decision, participants are further encouraged to deliberate with family and to perform the *istikharah* prayer, so that the decision rests on the readiness of both parties.

The study also found risks that cannot be disregarded. The first informant reported an attempted fraud by someone claiming to be a police officer and requesting a sum of money. That experience shows that the use of digital media retains the potential for identity misuse where it is not accompanied by adequate verification.

The KUA marriage counsellor likewise cautioned that people must be alert to false identities, manipulated information, and insufficient supervision in online *taaruf*. Mechanisms of verification and supervision are therefore an important part of preserving the safety and peace of mind of participants.

This finding accords with the argument of Helim and Suradilaga (2022) that *maqasid al-syari'ah* can serve as an analytical instrument for assessing whether a social practice, including technology-based interaction, protects or instead threatens the safety and honour of its users, so that the rules and sanctions applied within *taaruf* platforms may be understood as instruments for the fulfilment of *hifz al-nafs*.

Hifz al-'Aql (Preservation of the Intellect)

One principal objective of *maqashid syari'ah* is the preservation of the intellect (*hifz al-'aql*). In the context of marriage, preserving the intellect means not only guarding human reasoning against what impairs it but also affording a person room to reach a decision rationally, objectively, and on the basis of mature consideration. The choice of a spouse in Islam must therefore not rest on emotional impulse alone. It must weigh the religion, morals, character, mental readiness, and responsibility of the prospective spouse.

The interviews show that the *taaruf* mechanism on the Instagram social media platform gives participants the opportunity to become acquainted through a structured question-and-answer session. The second informant explained that, once both participants have been brought together in a group supervised by an administrator, each is given the opportunity to raise questions about family background, education, employment, religious understanding, vision for married life, and daily habits. All questions are put openly, so that both parties obtain sufficient information before deciding whether to proceed to the next stage.

This process shows that the platform does not press participants into hasty decisions. Participants are instead given time to reflect, to discuss matters with family, and to perform the *istikharah* prayer before making a choice. In the author's view, such a mechanism is a concrete implementation of *hifz al-'aql*, since it encourages the fullest use of reason in the choice of a life partner.

That view is reinforced by the KUA marriage counsellor, who stated that one purpose of *taaruf* is to give both prospective spouses the opportunity to obtain accurate information about each other's character, background, and commitment, so that the decision to marry does not rest on emotional attraction alone. The study also found, however, that online media is limited in its capacity to convey a person's character in full. The first informant stated that communication through digital media conveys only about eighty per cent of a prospective spouse's personality. She therefore considered it necessary to verify matters with close friends, family, and others who knew the candidate before reaching a final decision.

In the author's analysis, this finding shows that the use of social media must not replace the process of *tabayyun*, or clarification. From the perspective of *maqashid syari'ah*, the use of reason must instead be realised through a critical attitude towards

all information received, so that the decision to marry rests on accurate and defensible data.

Maqashid syari'ah must be understood through a systems approach, that is, an approach that views Islamic law as a whole and takes account of the relations between elements within a system, the social context, and the legal objectives to be realised (Auda, 2008). On that basis, the present study treats the use of digital media as only one element within the *taaruf* process. The decision to marry must still weigh the religion, character, family, and social circumstances of the prospective spouse as an interrelated whole. The researcher therefore holds that online *taaruf* on the Instagram social media platform supports the realisation of *hifz al-'aql*, since it gives participants the opportunity to reflect carefully, to verify information, to deliberate with family, and to decide rationally.

Hifz al-Nasl (Preservation of Lineage)

The next objective of *maqashid syari'ah* is the preservation of lineage (*hifz al-nasl*). This aspect is the most closely connected with marriage, since Islam ordains marriage as the lawful path to forming a family and producing offspring of established descent.

The findings show that all informants identified the principal aim of entering online *taaruf* as obtaining a life partner by lawful means. The first informant explained that she chose online *taaruf* as an endeavour to avoid dating and to guard against a relationship not yet lawful. For her, *taaruf* is the path more consistent with the sharia, since every stage is directed towards the marriage contract. A similar view was expressed by religious figures, who stated that *taaruf* is among the ways Islam sanctions for prospective spouses to become acquainted before marriage. Its principal purpose is to give the prospective husband and wife the opportunity to learn each other's character and commitment, so that the marriage is built on knowledge, mature consideration, and the intention to worship Allah the Almighty.

From the perspective of *maqashid syari'ah*, that purpose is closely relevant to *hifz al-nasl*. Through a properly conducted *taaruf* mechanism, the relationship between a man and a woman is directed towards the marriage contract, which preserves clarity of *nasab*, family honour, and the continuity of a generation born of a lawful marriage. The study also found that the stages of *nadzor*, *khitbah*, and the marriage contract represent a form of prudence before entering married life. Each stage gives prospective spouses the opportunity to establish compatibility, which is expected to reduce conflict within the household after marriage.

This orientation towards lawful marriage is the core of the fulfilment of *hifz al-nasl*, as affirmed in Islamic family law scholarship, which holds that marriage is the principal instrument of the sharia for preserving clarity of descent and the continuity of a generation lawful in both religious and state law. Online *taaruf* in Birobuli Selatan, consistently oriented towards the marriage contract, may therefore be judged consistent with this objective of the sharia.

Hifz al-Mal (Preservation of Property)

The final objective of *maqashid syari'ah* is the preservation of property (*hifz al-mal*). In the context of online *taaruf*, preserving property concerns not only the protection of wealth but also the prevention of fraud, identity manipulation, and economic loss that may arise during the search for a partner.

The findings show that the use of social media brings convenience to participants by reducing travel costs and widening the reach of the search. Participants need not meet in person at the initial stage, so that the search becomes more efficient in both time and cost. The study also found risks connected with the economic aspect. The first informant disclosed an attempted fraud by someone claiming to be a police officer and requesting a sum of money. That experience shows that digital media retains the potential for misuse by irresponsible parties.

The KUA marriage counsellor also emphasised the importance of honesty in disclosing identity and the economic circumstances of a prospective spouse, so that no loss is caused to the other party. Religious figures, meanwhile, affirmed that the use of social media is permitted so long as it involves no element of fraud, manipulation, or conduct contrary to the sharia.

This difference in experience confirms the finding of Musthofa and Laily (2022) that the element of *gharar* and the potential for financial loss in online *taaruf* depend heavily on the credibility of the platform and on the prudence of participants in their transactions and communication, so that the fulfilment of *hifz al-mal* in the context of online *taaruf* is not automatic but the outcome of individual vigilance and of the integrity of the system of supervision employed.

Conclusion

The concept of online *taaruf* understood and practised by the people of Birobuli Selatan is in essence a process of introduction between a man and a woman leading towards marriage, which uses social media, and Instagram in particular, as the initial means of bringing prospective spouses together, and which then continues through an application or a communication group supervised by an intermediary, whether an administrator or a facilitator. The community understands *taaruf* as fundamentally different from dating, as affirmed by informants with a religious background. *Taaruf* emphasises seriousness, openness, *adab*, and the involvement of a third party or of family as facilitator, rather than an undirected emotional closeness.

In practice, the online *taaruf* undertaken by the community generally proceeds through a reasonably structured sequence: exchange of biodata or curriculum vitae, a question-and-answer session in a group supervised by an intermediary, *nadzor* or seeing one another directly, *khitbah*, and the marriage contract. These stages show that although the process begins online, an effort is made to preserve *syar'i* limits by providing a facilitator and by confining communication to matters relevant to the purpose of marriage.

Public understanding of the practice varies but tends towards the positive, subject to a number of cautions. Some informants reported substantial benefit in the avoidance of *ikhhtilat*, the guarding of feelings before the marriage contract, and ease of reaching prospective spouses who share their vision of religion and married life. Community members are also aware of risks in online *taaruf*, such as the potential for fraud, including deception by a person posing as an official and requesting money, the risk of inappropriate feelings arising before the contract, false identities, manipulated information, and *taaruf* conducted without an intermediary, which is regarded as less safe and less consistent with the recommended method. The success and safety of online *taaruf* therefore depend heavily on the suitability of the medium or platform used and on the presence of responsible supervision, rather than on social media itself.

Online *taaruf* is in principle judged capable of supporting and according with the five principal objectives of the sharia (*maqashid syari'ah*). *Hifz al-din* is served because online *taaruf* helps individuals avoid relationships or forms of association that contradict the sharia, such as dating, and serves as an endeavour towards a marriage intended as an act of worship. *Hifz al-nafs* is served because the rules, supervision, and sanctions provided by the platform give participants a sense of security and encourage mutual respect throughout the process. *Hifz al-'aql* is served because a structured question-and-answer process encourages participants to assess the character, background, and seriousness of a prospective spouse rationally rather than on emotional attraction alone. *Hifz al-nasl* is served because online *taaruf* is directed towards forming a lawful family through marriage, and thus contributes to preserving clarity of descent and to the formation of a *sakinah* family. *Hifz al-mal* is served because honesty in the *taaruf* process protects participants from material loss and fraud, although in practice such risks persist and have been experienced by some informants.

Fulfilment of these five aspects of *maqashid syari'ah* is nevertheless neither absolute nor automatically inherent in every instance of online *taaruf*. The informants agreed that the original ruling on the use of social media as a means of *muamalah*, including the search for a spouse, is *mubah*, or permitted, so long as it does not contradict *syar'i* evidence. Whether the objectives of *maqashid syari'ah* are attained depends heavily on the manner, the method, and the *wasilah* employed, that is, on whether the process is accompanied by *adab*, honesty, appropriate supervision, and a commitment to preserving the limits of interaction between men and women. It may therefore be concluded that Instagram and online *taaruf* platforms are merely neutral instruments, while the realisation of benefit consistent with *maqashid syari'ah* is determined by how the *taaruf* process is conducted by each party. Further research on a wider sample of platforms, and on couples whose marriages began through online *taaruf*, would allow the durability of that benefit to be tested over time.

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