



Interpretation of “Nushūz” (An-Nisa: 34) in the Digital Age: Cyber Violence and the Redefinition of Marital Disobedience

Wilnan Fatahillah*

Sekolah Tinggi Agama
Islam

Minhaajurroosyidiin
(Staimi) Jakarta,
Indonesia

Dedi Uska

Sekolah Tinggi Agama
Islam

Minhaajurroosyidiin
(Staimi) Jakarta,
Indonesia

Hari Winarsa

Sekolah Tinggi Agama
Islam

Minhaajurroosyidiin
(Staimi) Jakarta,
Indonesia

Untung Famuji

Universitas Islam
Negeri Prof. K.H.

Saifuddin Zuhri (Uin
Saizu) Purwokerto,
Indonesia

Article Info

Article history:

Received: April, 29, 2026

Revised: June, 01, 2026

Accepted: July, 03, 2026

Keywords:

Cyber-Violence;
Digital Age;
Marital Disobedience;
Nushūz;
Qur'an 4:34.

Abstract

This study reinterprets the Qur'anic concept of nushūz in Qur'an 4:34 within the context of cyber violence and digitally mediated marital harm. Classical interpretations have often confined nushūz to physical departure, sexual refusal, or one-sided marital disobedience, thereby limiting its capacity to address non-physical forms of domination in contemporary Muslim households. Using qualitative conceptual research based on systematic library study, critical contextual hermeneutics, and feminist legal hermeneutics, this article examines selected tafsir works, Islamic family-law scholarship, and recent studies on technology-facilitated abuse. This study fills the gap between cyber-violence scholarship and Islamic legal hermeneutics by showing how digital abuse can be interpreted through Qur'anic marital ethics. The analysis demonstrates that nushūz contains a broader ethical meaning related to rupture, imbalance, arrogance, and serious relational disruption. When placed in dialogue with digital realities, cyber violence emerges as a form of marital harm that threatens privacy, dignity, psychological safety, autonomy, and relational justice. The study identifies three principal mechanisms of cyber-nushūz: extractive surveillance, including spyware and unauthorized tracking; reputational weaponization, including online humiliation and image-based abuse; and algorithmic restriction, including digital financial control and blocked access to communication technologies. The article contributes to contemporary Islamic family law by proposing cyber-nushūz as a legal-ethical category grounded in Qur'anic ethics and maqāṣid al-sharī'ah. This framework expands the interpretation of nushūz beyond bodily and spatial disobedience toward a digital rights-based understanding of marital violation. Practically, the findings offer a normative basis for religious courts, mediators, and Muslim family-law practitioners to recognize coercive digital conduct as serious marital harm in digitally connected societies.

To cite this article: Fatahillah, W., Uska, D., Winarsa, H., Famuji, U. (2026). Interpretation of “Nushūz” (An-Nisa: 34) in the Digital Age: Cyber Violence and the Redefinition of Marital Disobedience. *Al Qodiri: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial dan Keagamaan*, 24 (2), 787-797.

INTRODUCTION

Digital technologies have reshaped the structure of intimate and domestic life by extending communication, visibility, and control into spaces that were once understood as private. In contemporary households, mobile phones, messaging applications, cloud storage, GPS systems, social media platforms, and smart devices are no longer peripheral tools but part of everyday marital interaction. These technologies can strengthen care and connection, yet they can also be misused to

* Corresponding author:

Wilnan Fatahillah, Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Minhaajurroosyidiin (Staimi) Jakarta, Indonesia

wlnfatah@gmail.com

monitor, intimidate, isolate, or shame a spouse. Recent studies on technology-facilitated abuse show that digital tools increasingly operate as extensions of coercive control in intimate relationships (Atiénzar-Prieto et al., 2025; Bailey et al., 2024). This transformation challenges scholars of religion and family law to reconsider whether classical legal categories can adequately respond to harms that are psychological, informational, and algorithmic rather than merely physical. In this context, the Qur'anic concept of *nushūz* in Qur'an 4:34 becomes an important site for reinterpretation.

Cyber violence within intimate relationships is not limited to hostile messages, verbal insults, or online threats. It may include non-consensual access to private accounts, forced password sharing, GPS tracking, spyware installation, image-based sexual abuse, online humiliation, and digital financial restriction. These practices often leave no visible bodily injury, but they may produce fear, dependency, social isolation, reputational damage, and long-term psychological distress. Empirical studies on cyber intimate partner violence indicate that online abuse frequently overlaps with offline emotional, sexual, and physical abuse, making it part of a wider pattern of domination rather than an isolated technological problem (Afrouz & Vassos, 2024; Boxall et al., 2025; Taccini & Mannarini, 2024). The danger becomes more complex in marital relationships because digital monitoring can be framed as care, protection, jealousy, or moral responsibility. For Muslim families, this issue becomes even more sensitive when religious language is used to justify surveillance under the banner of *qiwāmah*.

The urgency of this issue lies in the widening gap between rapid technological change and the slower development of religious-legal interpretation. Islamic family law contains strong ethical principles for protecting dignity, privacy, justice, and marital harmony, but many classical discussions of *nushūz* were formulated in social contexts where digital privacy, cyber surveillance, and online reputational harm did not yet exist. As a result, harmful practices such as secretly tracking a spouse's location, coercively accessing private conversations, or exposing intimate conflicts online may not be immediately recognized as serious marital violations. Contemporary research on technology-facilitated gender-based violence shows that digital abuse often works through repeated control, surveillance, and restriction rather than through a single visible act of violence (Faith, 2022; O'Brien & Maras, 2024). This condition creates a conceptual and legal blind spot for Muslim communities, religious mediators, and family courts. Therefore, rethinking *nushūz* in the digital age is not only a theoretical exercise but also a practical effort to protect marital dignity and prevent religious concepts from being misused.

The interpretation of Qur'an 4:34 must be approached carefully because the verse has long been central to debates on authority, responsibility, conflict, and gender relations in marriage. Classical exegetical traditions often associated *nushūz* with a wife's disobedience, departure from the marital home, or refusal of marital obligations. However, a broader linguistic and ethical reading shows that *nushūz* also implies rupture, arrogance, disruption, and imbalance in a relationship that should be grounded in mutual responsibility. Recent Islamic family-law scholarship has increasingly challenged one-sided patriarchal readings and argued that *qiwāmah* and *nushūz* should be interpreted through justice, reciprocity, and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (Hammad, 2025). This interpretive shift is important because cyber violence is not merely a technical violation of privacy; it is a relational harm that damages *sakīnah*, *mawaddah*, and *raḥmah*. For this reason, digital abuse needs to be examined as a contemporary form of marital misconduct that violates the ethical foundation of Islamic marriage.

Previous studies have made important contributions to understanding technology-facilitated abuse, cyber intimate partner violence, and digital coercive control. Rogers et al., (2023) explain how technology-facilitated abuse operates in intimate relationships through monitoring, impersonation, threats, and restriction. Huang et al., (2022) map a wider range of adverse digital experiences, while Eaton et al., (2023) demonstrate the relationship between cyber intimate partner violence and in-person victimization. Díaz-Aguado & Martínez-Arias, (2022) further show that cyber and offline forms of dating abuse often overlap and reinforce each other. Sheikh & Rogers, (2024) identify technology-facilitated gender-based violence as a serious issue in Asian contexts, while Anom & Rassanjani, (2026); Kaiser, (2026); Masyhar et al., (2026) emphasize that digital abuse should be understood as a structural pattern of coercion rather than merely online misconduct. The dominant tendency in this body of literature is to frame cyber violence through criminology, sociology, digital

safety, and gender studies. Although this scholarship is valuable, it rarely engages with Qur'anic hermeneutics or Islamic family-law categories.

At the same time, recent Islamic legal studies have revisited nushūz, qiwāmah, gender justice, and maqāṣid-based family law. Musafa'ah et al., (2025) examine how online tafsir platforms reframe nushūz in Indonesian Islamic discourse. Mustofa, (2025) proposes a maqāṣid-based reform of Islamic family law by interpreting qiwāmah as shared responsibility and nushūz as relational dysfunction. Muttaqin et al., (2026) ; Rubab et al., (2026) also emphasize the need to read Qur'an 4:34 through justice, protection, and contemporary family realities. However, these studies still tend to discuss nushūz within the framework of marital authority, gender equality, and domestic responsibility, without giving sufficient attention to digital surveillance, spyware, algorithmic restriction, cyber humiliation, or image-based abuse as forms of marital harm. Conversely, studies on cyber violence rarely examine how Islamic concepts such as nushūz, tajassus, libās, mīthāqan ghalīzā, and maqāṣid al-sharī'ah can provide a normative vocabulary for digital marital ethics. This reveals a clear research gap: no existing study has systematically connected cyber intimate partner violence with the reinterpretation of nushūz in Qur'an 4:34 through a maqāṣid-based digital rights framework.

Based on this gap, this study aims to reinterpret nushūz in Qur'an 4:34 in light of cyber violence and digital forms of marital coercion. It argues that nushūz should not be reduced to physical departure, sexual refusal, or one-sided disobedience, but should be understood as any serious relational disruption that destroys dignity, privacy, justice, and marital balance. The novelty of this study lies in proposing cyber-nushūz as a conceptual category within contemporary Islamic family law. Theoretically, this article contributes by developing a digital rights-based hermeneutic reading of nushūz that connects Qur'anic ethics, maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, and contemporary studies on technology-facilitated abuse. Methodologically, it offers an interdisciplinary model that places classical tafsir, feminist legal hermeneutics, and digital violence scholarship into a single analytical framework. Practically, it provides a conceptual basis for religious courts, mediators, and Muslim family-law scholars to recognize digital surveillance, online humiliation, and coercive technological control as serious marital violations.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative conceptual design based on systematic library research and critical contextual hermeneutics. This design was selected because the study examines the meaning of nushūz in Qur'an 4:34 and reconstructs it in relation to cyber violence within marriage, rather than measuring statistical relationships or collecting field responses. Systematic library research was used to ensure that the sources were selected, organized, and interpreted through explicit criteria, while hermeneutics was applied to connect the historical meaning of the text with contemporary digital harms (Foley et al., 2023; Liang et al., 2025). Feminist legal hermeneutics was also used to identify gendered assumptions in the interpretation of marital authority, obedience, and harm (Kalvari, 2026). Therefore, the study combines Qur'anic interpretation, Islamic legal reasoning, and contemporary cyber-violence scholarship in a single conceptual framework.

Data Corpus and Source Selection

The data corpus consisted of three groups of sources. The first group was primary tafsir literature on Qur'an 4:34, especially *Al-Jāmi' li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by al-Qurṭubī, *Tafsīr al-Manār* by Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, and *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* by Sayyid Quṭb. These works were selected purposively because they represent different interpretive traditions: classical legal-oriented tafsir, early modern reformist interpretation, and twentieth-century revivalist interpretation. The second group consisted of Islamic family-law studies discussing nushūz, qiwāmah, marital responsibility, maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, privacy, and harm. The third group consisted of recent studies on cyber intimate partner violence, technology-facilitated abuse, digital surveillance, coercive control, online humiliation, spyware, and digital rights.

Source selection was conducted through purposive textual sampling. Sources were included if they directly addressed Qur'an 4:34, nushūz, Islamic marital ethics, cyber violence, or technology-facilitated abuse. Sources were excluded when they were non-academic opinion pieces, duplicate materials, unsupported online content, or texts that did not contribute to the study's conceptual

focus. This selection strategy allowed the study to compare classical Islamic concepts with contemporary forms of digital marital harm in a controlled and transparent manner. The final corpus was determined based on conceptual relevance, interpretive authority, and direct contribution to the reconstruction of nushūz in the context of digital marital harm.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection was conducted through document analysis. The researchers first identified and extracted passages from the selected tafsir works related to nushūz, qiwāmah, marital authority, conflict, obedience, and harm. The second step involved collecting Islamic legal scholarship that discusses the ethical and legal meaning of marital responsibility and violation. The third step involved mapping contemporary literature on cyber intimate partner violence and digital coercive control to identify forms of harm that may occur within marriage. All extracted data were organized in a coding matrix based on four analytical indicators: definition of nushūz, construction of marital authority, recognition of harm and privacy, and relevance to digital abuse.

The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis combined with critical contextual hermeneutics. The analysis proceeded in three stages. First, deconstructive analysis was used to examine physical, spatial, and gendered assumptions in classical interpretations of nushūz. Second, contextual analysis was used to classify contemporary forms of cyber violence, including digital surveillance, online humiliation, image-based abuse, algorithmic restriction, and digital financial control. Third, dialectical synthesis was used to connect tafsir, maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, and digital rights discourse in order to formulate cyber-nushūz as a contemporary legal-ethical category. This process follows the logic of qualitative content analysis, where meaning is developed through systematic coding, categorization, interpretation, and thematic synthesis (Başaran et al., 2024; Turner et al., 2023).

Table 1. Analytical Framework for the Reconstruction of Nushūz in the Context of Cyber Violence

Analytical Stage	Focus of Analysis	Expected Output
Deconstruction	Classical and modern meanings of nushūz in Qur'an 4:34	Identification of physical, spatial, and gendered assumptions
Contextualization	Forms of cyber intimate partner violence	Classification of digital marital harms
Dialectical synthesis	Tafsir, maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, and digital rights	Formulation of cyber-nushūz as a legal-ethical concept

The table above shows that the analysis was not conducted through free interpretation alone. Each stage had a clear function, beginning from the reading of classical texts, continuing to the mapping of contemporary cyber violence, and ending with the reconstruction of nushūz as a concept relevant to digital marital ethics.

Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

The trustworthiness of the study was maintained through source triangulation, audit trail, and peer checking. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing tafsir texts, Islamic legal scholarship, and contemporary cyber-violence studies. An audit trail was used to document the process of source selection, coding, categorization, and interpretation. Peer checking was applied to ensure that the interpretation of nushūz, qiwāmah, tajassus, libās, mīthāqan ghalīzā, and maqāṣid al-sharī'ah remained consistent with the selected corpus. Since this study did not involve human participants, interviews, surveys, or personal data, formal informed consent was not required. Nevertheless, the study followed academic ethical principles by ensuring accurate citation, avoiding plagiarism, and presenting religious texts and sensitive issues of domestic violence in a careful and non-stigmatizing manner.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The analysis of the selected tafsir corpus and contemporary digital-violence literature produced five main findings. These findings show that the meaning of nushūz in Qur'an 4:34 cannot be confined to physical departure, bodily refusal, or one-sided marital disobedience. The textual

analysis indicates that nushūz contains a wider ethical meaning related to rupture, imbalance, arrogance, and disruption within the marital relationship. When this broader meaning is placed in dialogue with cyber violence, digital surveillance, online humiliation, and coercive technological control can be understood as contemporary forms of marital harm. The findings are presented below through thematic categories derived from the analytical stages of deconstruction, contextualization, and dialectical synthesis.

The Semantic Narrowing of Nushūz in Classical Interpretation

The first finding shows that classical interpretations of nushūz were strongly shaped by physical, spatial, and hierarchical assumptions. In the classical legal-oriented reading, nushūz was commonly associated with a wife’s departure from the marital home without the husband’s permission or refusal to fulfil certain marital obligations. This interpretation placed the concept within a framework of bodily presence, domestic residence, and marital obedience. As a consequence, nushūz was often treated as a visible act of disobedience rather than a broader form of relational harm.

The analysis also shows that this narrow meaning does not fully represent the semantic potential of the term. Linguistically, nushūz implies elevation, rupture, or the emergence of imbalance within an expected order. This meaning allows the concept to be read beyond physical movement or bodily compliance. It may refer to any serious disturbance that damages justice, dignity, reciprocity, and harmony in marriage. Therefore, the first result of this study is the identification of a semantic gap between the narrower legal use of nushūz and its broader ethical meaning.

Table 2. Interpretive Patterns of Nushūz in the Selected Tafsir Corpus

Tafsir Corpus	Dominant Orientation	Main Understanding of Nushūz	Analytical Implication
Al-Jāmi’ li Aḥkām al-Qur’ān	Classical legal-oriented tafsir	Disobedience expressed through physical departure or refusal of marital obligation	Nushūz is mainly framed through spatial and bodily control
Tafsīr al-Manār	Early modern reformist tafsir	Relational disorder that damages justice and mutual responsibility	Nushūz can be understood through reciprocity and ethical balance
Fi Zilāl al-Qur’ān	Twentieth-century revivalist tafsir	A threat to family stability and moral order	Nushūz can be connected to the protection of marital harmony

Table 2 shows that the selected tafsir works do not produce a single uniform reading of nushūz. The classical legal reading emphasizes physical and spatial obedience, while the reformist and revivalist readings provide space for understanding nushūz as relational disorder and disruption of family harmony. This variation becomes the basis for reconstructing nushūz in response to digital marital harms.

Cyber Violence as a Contemporary Form of Marital Harm

The second finding shows that cyber violence can be conceptually linked to nushūz when it damages privacy, dignity, emotional safety, and relational balance within marriage. In the digital age, marital harm is not always physical or visible. A spouse may experience control and intimidation through hidden monitoring, forced access to private accounts, unauthorized tracking, online exposure, or restriction of digital resources. These acts may occur while the victim remains physically present in the marital home, which means that spatial presence does not always indicate marital safety.

The analysis identifies three main patterns of cyber violence that are relevant to the reconstruction of nushūz. The first is extractive surveillance, which includes spyware, GPS tracking, forced password access, and unauthorized account monitoring. The second is reputational weaponization, which includes online humiliation, exposure of private conflict, image-based abuse, and public shaming. The third is algorithmic restriction, which includes blocking access to digital

finance, communication tools, shared devices, or smart-home systems. These patterns show that technology can be used not only as a communication tool, but also as an instrument of domination.

Table 3. Taxonomy of Cyber-Nushūz in Digital Marital Relations

Form of Cyber-Nushūz	Mechanism of Digital Abuse	Marital Harm Produced	Islamic Ethical Principle Violated
Extractive surveillance	Stalkerware, GPS tracking, forced access to messages, unauthorized account monitoring	Loss of privacy, fear, anxiety, and continuous psychological pressure	Privacy and prohibition of spying
Reputational weaponization	Online humiliation, exposure of private conflict, image-based abuse, public shaming	Loss of dignity, social isolation, reputational damage, and emotional trauma	Dignity, confidentiality, and protection of marital honour
Algorithmic restriction	Blocking access to digital finance, communication tools, shared devices, or smart-home systems	Loss of autonomy, economic dependency, and digital captivity	Justice, responsibility, and ethical use of authority

Table 3 presents cyber-nushūz as a structured category of marital violation. The table shows that the central issue is not technology itself, but the coercive use of technology to monitor, expose, restrict, or degrade a spouse. This taxonomy helps clarify how digital abuse can violate Islamic marital ethics.

From Physical Disobedience to Relational Disruption

The third finding indicates a conceptual shift from understanding nushūz as physical disobedience to understanding it as relational disruption. A narrow interpretation limits nushūz to conduct that can be observed in physical space, such as leaving the home or refusing certain obligations. This approach is insufficient for digital marital realities because cyber violence can occur without physical departure or visible injury. A spouse may remain in the same house while being digitally monitored, socially isolated, emotionally threatened, or financially restricted through online systems.

This finding does not eliminate the classical concern with marital conflict. Rather, it expands the meaning of marital violation by focusing on the harm produced by conduct within the relationship. The core question is not merely whether a spouse obeys or disobeys in a physical sense, but whether one spouse destroys the dignity, trust, safety, and balance of the marital bond. In this sense, cyber violence may be classified as nushūz when it is coercive, harmful, and directed toward controlling or degrading the other spouse.

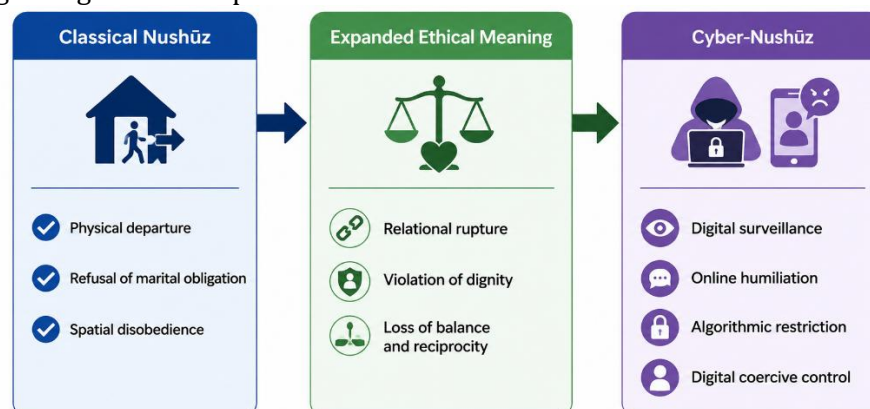


Figure 1. Conceptual Shift from Classical Nushūz to Cyber-Nushūz

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual movement from a narrow physical understanding of nushūz to a broader ethical and digital understanding. The model does not reject the classical meaning, but extends it to include forms of marital harm that operate through digital technologies.

Reconstruction of Nushūz through Maqāṣid-Based Digital Ethics

The fourth finding shows that cyber-nushūz can be reconstructed through a maqāṣid-based digital ethics framework. In this framework, marital conduct is assessed not only through outward compliance, but also through its impact on dignity, privacy, psychological safety, justice, and relational balance. Digital violence becomes a serious marital violation because it threatens several protected values at the same time. Unauthorized surveillance violates privacy and dignity. Online humiliation damages reputation and emotional security. Digital financial restriction weakens autonomy and creates dependency. Algorithmic control restricts communication, access, and participation.

This reconstruction places digital privacy within the ethical structure of Islamic family law. Privacy is not treated as an individualistic concept detached from religion, but as part of the protection of dignity, trust, and marital confidentiality. Psychological safety is also central because marriage is expected to provide tranquility, affection, and mercy. When digital technology is used to create fear, shame, dependency, or captivity, it contradicts the ethical purpose of marriage. Therefore, the category of cyber-nushūz is justified when digital conduct causes serious harm to the moral and relational foundations of marriage.

Table 4. Maqāṣid-Based Reconstruction of Cyber-Nushūz

Digital Marital Harm	Protected Value Affected	Ethical Consequence	Classification
Unauthorized surveillance	Privacy and dignity	The spouse is treated as an object of control	Cyber-nushūz
Online humiliation	Reputation and marital confidentiality	The protective function of marriage is violated	Cyber-nushūz
Image-based abuse	Bodily dignity and psychological safety	Intimacy is turned into a weapon of domination	Severe cyber-nushūz
Digital financial restriction	Autonomy and welfare	Access to economic life is coercively controlled	Cyber-nushūz
Algorithmic restriction	Freedom, communication, and safety	The household becomes a space of digital captivity	Severe cyber-nushūz

Table 4 connects forms of digital marital harm with protected values in Islamic family law. The table demonstrates that cyber-nushūz is not a loose metaphor, but a legal-ethical category built from the relationship between digital abuse, protected values, and the harm produced within marriage.

Paradigm Shift for Islamic Family Law

The fifth finding shows that the reinterpretation of nushūz has implications for Islamic family law and religious-court reasoning. If nushūz is understood only as physical disobedience, digital violence may remain legally and theologically invisible. However, if nushūz is understood as serious relational disruption, then digital surveillance, online humiliation, and coercive technological control can be recognized as valid forms of marital violation. This shift is important for mediators, judges, and family-law scholars who must respond to marital conflict in digitally connected societies.

The reconstructed framework also requires a broader understanding of evidence. Physical injury should not be the only indicator of marital harm. Digital traces such as threatening messages, unauthorized tracking records, spyware evidence, forced password access, online humiliation, and restrictions on financial or communication platforms may also indicate coercive marital abuse. However, not every digital conflict should automatically be classified as cyber-nushūz. The classification applies when the conduct is coercive, repeated, harmful, and directed toward controlling, humiliating, or restricting a spouse.

Table 5. Paradigm Shift in Understanding Nushūz

Dimension	Traditional Paradigm	Digital-Ethical Paradigm
Core meaning of nushūz	Physical disobedience or departure from marital order	Serious relational disruption that harms dignity, privacy, and balance
Main form of harm	Bodily, spatial, or material violation	Psychological, informational, reputational, and algorithmic harm
Subject of violation	Often framed around the wife’s conduct	Can be committed by either spouse

Dimension	Traditional Paradigm	Digital-Ethical Paradigm
Evidence of harm	Physical injury, departure, visible neglect, or material abandonment	Digital traces, spyware records, coercive messages, online exposure, and restricted access
Legal-ethical response	Reconciliation aimed at restoring obedience	Protection aimed at restoring dignity, safety, and justice

Table 5 is a synthesized result derived from the comparison between the traditional paradigm and the digital-progressive paradigm in the original analytical corpus. It shows that the proposed digital-ethical reading does not erase the classical framework, but expands its scope so that Islamic family law can recognize harms that occur through digital technologies.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that cyber violence can be conceptualized as cyber-nushūz when it disrupts marital dignity, privacy, justice, emotional safety, and relational balance. The study identifies three core mechanisms of cyber-nushūz: extractive surveillance, reputational weaponization, and algorithmic restriction. These mechanisms show that digital abuse is not a minor technical problem, but a serious marital harm that may violate the ethical purposes of marriage. By reconstructing nushūz through a maqāṣid-based digital ethics framework, this study provides a conceptual basis for recognizing digital coercive control as a contemporary form of marital violation within Islamic family law.

Discussion

The first finding demonstrates that the classical understanding of nushūz has been narrowed by physical, spatial, and hierarchical assumptions. This narrowing is not merely a linguistic issue, but a legal-ethical problem because it limits marital violation to conduct that can be seen in physical space. When nushūz is interpreted mainly as departure from the marital home or refusal of marital obligation, non-physical harms such as psychological control, privacy invasion, and digital intimidation remain conceptually invisible. This finding supports recent Islamic legal scholarship that calls for a more reciprocal reading of Qur'an 4:34, especially through justice, mutual responsibility, and maqāṣid-oriented reasoning (Hammad, 2025; Musafa'ah et al., 2025; Mustofa, 2025). However, this study extends those works by showing that the semantic openness of nushūz is not only relevant to gender justice, but also to new forms of harm produced through digital technologies. The implication is that nushūz should be understood as a disruption of marital dignity and balance, not merely as a one-sided act of disobedience.

The second finding shows that cyber violence can function as a contemporary form of marital harm because it operates through control, exposure, and restriction. Digital surveillance, spyware, forced password access, online humiliation, and digital financial restriction may not leave physical injury, but they can create fear, dependency, shame, and emotional insecurity. This supports studies on technology-facilitated abuse which argue that digital harm often works as an extension of coercive control rather than as isolated online misconduct (Atiñzar-Prieto et al., 2025; Bailey et al., 2024; Boxall et al., 2025; O'Brien & Maras, 2024; Rogers et al., 2023). Similar findings are also found in studies showing the overlap between cyber abuse and offline intimate partner violence (Afrouz & Vassos, 2024; Eaton et al., 2023; Taccini & Mannarini, 2024). The difference is that this study places such harm within the normative language of Islamic marital ethics. Therefore, cyber violence becomes relevant to nushūz when technology is used systematically to damage privacy, dignity, and emotional safety within marriage.

The third finding shifts the meaning of nushūz from physical disobedience to relational disruption. This shift modifies the theoretical position of nushūz by moving the focus from outward compliance to the quality of the marital relationship itself. A spouse may remain physically present in the home while being digitally monitored, isolated, threatened, or financially restricted through online systems. This finding expands maqāṣid-based family-law studies which emphasize protection, justice, and mutual responsibility in marital rights and duties (Muttaqin et al., 2026; Rubab et al., 2026). It also challenges interpretations of qiwāmah that treat marital authority as control rather than responsibility bounded by dignity and justice (Hammad, 2025; Mustofa, 2025). The conceptual contribution of this study lies in arguing that marital violation in the digital age should be assessed by the harm it produces, not only by whether it fits classical categories of bodily or spatial disobedience.

The fourth finding shows that cyber-nushūz can be reconstructed through a maqāṣid-based digital ethics framework. Unauthorized surveillance violates privacy and dignity, online humiliation damages reputation and marital confidentiality, while algorithmic restriction weakens autonomy and psychological safety. This interpretation extends maqāṣid al-sharī'ah by applying its protective logic to digital harms that did not exist in classical legal contexts. It is consistent with studies arguing that online spaces reproduce unequal power relations and may intensify vulnerability when law and social institutions fail to recognize digital abuse (Faith, 2022; Sheikh & Rogers, 2024). At the same time, this study differs from general digital ethics research because it grounds privacy, safety, and autonomy in Islamic legal-ethical categories rather than treating them only as secular rights (Anom & Rassanjani, 2026; Masyhar et al., 2026). This means that digital privacy can be understood as part of Islamic marital ethics, especially because marriage is expected to protect trust, confidentiality, and human dignity.

The fifth finding indicates that the reinterpretation of nushūz has practical implications for Islamic family-law reasoning, especially in religious courts and mediation settings. If marital harm continues to be measured mainly through physical injury, abandonment, or material neglect, cyber violence may remain legally and theologically invisible. Digital traces such as threatening messages, spyware records, unauthorized tracking, forced account access, online exposure, and financial restriction should therefore be considered possible indicators of coercive marital abuse. However, not every digital conflict should automatically be classified as cyber-nushūz, because ordinary disagreement or jealousy may also occur through digital media. The concept becomes relevant only when the conduct is coercive, repeated, harmful, and intended to control, humiliate, or restrict a spouse. This position aligns with recent studies that define technology-facilitated abuse as patterned control rather than episodic conflict (Boxall et al., 2025; O'Brien & Maras, 2024; Rogers et al., 2023). Thus, this study contributes to the global literature by introducing cyber-nushūz as a new legal-ethical category that connects Qur'anic hermeneutics, maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, and contemporary cyber-violence studies.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that nushūz in Qur'an 4:34 should not be confined to physical departure, sexual refusal, or one-sided marital disobedience. The findings demonstrate that the concept possesses a broader ethical meaning centred on relational rupture, imbalance, and the violation of justice within marriage. When interpreted in the context of contemporary digital life, cyber violence emerges as a form of marital harm that threatens privacy, dignity, emotional security, autonomy, and relational balance. Accordingly, extractive digital surveillance, online humiliation, image-based abuse, digital financial restriction, and algorithmic control may be understood as cyber-nushūz when they constitute coercive, repeated, and harmful practices intended to dominate, intimidate, or degrade a spouse. This reinterpretation extends the legal-ethical scope of nushūz from a narrowly physical conception toward a more comprehensive framework capable of responding to emerging forms of harm in digitally mediated marital relationships.

The principal contribution of this study is the development of cyber-nushūz as a new conceptual category within contemporary Islamic family law. Unlike previous studies that generally discuss cyber violence from criminological, sociological, or digital-rights perspectives, or examine nushūz primarily within the framework of marital obedience and gender relations, this study integrates Qur'anic hermeneutics, maqāṣid al-sharī'ah, and contemporary scholarship on technology-facilitated abuse into a coherent analytical framework. By doing so, it establishes a conceptual bridge between classical Islamic legal thought and the realities of digital society, thereby expanding the interpretive capacity of Islamic family law to address forms of harm that were absent from classical legal contexts. Practically, the proposed framework offers a normative foundation for religious courts, mediators, and Islamic family-law practitioners to recognize digital evidence—including spyware records, unauthorized surveillance, coercive digital communications, online humiliation, and algorithmic restriction—as potential indicators of serious marital violation. Nevertheless, because this research is conceptual and based on systematic library research, future studies should empirically examine how cyber violence is experienced, interpreted, and adjudicated across different Muslim legal systems. Comparative and interdisciplinary research is also needed to

refine evidentiary standards and strengthen legal protection mechanisms for victims of cyber-nushūz in the evolving digital environment.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

Wilnan Fatahillah conceived the research idea, designed the study, conducted the literature review, performed the data collection and analysis, interpreted the findings, and prepared the original manuscript draft. Dedi Uska contributed to the conceptual development of the study, provided methodological guidance, and critically reviewed the interpretation of the findings. Hari Winarsa contributed to the analysis of Islamic family law and Qur'anic hermeneutics, reviewed the theoretical framework, and participated in revising the manuscript for important intellectual content. Untung Famuji supervised the overall research process, validated the analytical framework, contributed to the critical revision of the manuscript, and approved the final version for publication.

REFERENCES

- Afrouz, R., & Vassos, S. (2024). Adolescents' experiences of cyber-dating abuse and the pattern of abuse through technology: A scoping review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 25(4), 2814–2828. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380241227457>
- Anom, E., & Rassanjani, S. (2026). Digital ethics, cultural values, and self-regulation of social media activities in Indonesia and Malaysia. *Frontiers in Communication*, 11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2026.1745680>
- Atiénzar-Prieto, M., Baker, S., & Meyer, S. (2025). Young people's attitudes and perceptions of technology-facilitated coercive control: A scoping review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 82, 102054. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2025.102054>
- Bailey, L., Hulley, J., Gomersall, T., Kirkman, G., Gibbs, G., & Jones, A. D. (2024). The networking of abuse: Intimate partner violence and the use of social technologies. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 51(2), 266–285. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00938548231206827>
- Başaran, M., Metin, Ş., & Vural, Ö. F. (2024). Meta-thematic synthesis of research on early childhood coding education: A comprehensive review. *Education and Information Technologies*, 29(16), 20795–20822. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-024-12675-2>
- Boxall, H., Lawler, S., & Morgan, A. (2025). Unpacking variation in technology-facilitated intimate partner violence: A conceptual and empirical analysis. *Journal of Family Violence*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10896-025-00928-8>
- Díaz-Aguado, M. J., & Martínez-Arias, R. (2022). Types of male adolescent violence against women in three contexts: Dating violence offline, dating violence online, and sexual harassment online outside a relationship. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.850897>
- Eaton, A. A., Ramjee, D., & Saunders, J. F. (2023). The relationship between sextortion during COVID-19 and pre-pandemic intimate partner violence: A large study of victimization among diverse U.S. men and women. *Victims & Offenders*, 18(2), 338–355. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15564886.2021.2022057>
- Faith, B. (2022). Tackling online gender-based violence: Understanding gender, development, and the power relations of digital spaces. *Gender, Technology and Development*, 26(3), 325–340. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09718524.2022.2124600>
- Foley, H., Bugarcic, A., Adams, J., Wardle, J., Leach, M., & Steel, A. (2023). Criteria for the selection, evaluation and application of traditional knowledge in contemporary health practice, education, research and policy: A systematic review. *Health Information & Libraries Journal*, 40(3), 233–261. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hir.12499>
- Hammad, H. A. A.-K. (2025). Revisiting the concept of nusyūz: A recontextualised understanding in contemporary marital life. *Nusantara: Journal of Law Studies*, 4(2), 143–156. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17345680>
- Huang, P., Kim, K., & Schermer, M. (2022). Ethical issues of digital twins for personalized health care service: Preliminary mapping study. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 24(1), e33081. <https://doi.org/10.2196/33081>

- Kaiser, R. (2026). Economic abuse in coercive control trajectories: Applying escalation pattern analysis to intimate partner violence. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380261439143>
- Kalvari, L. (2026). Constrained agency in biblical women's narratives: Trauma-informed hermeneutics for clinical pastoral practice. *Pastoral Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11089-026-01348-1>
- Liang, Y., Xie, B., Tan, W., & Zhang, Q. (2025). Ontology-based construction of embroidery intangible cultural heritage knowledge graph: A case study of Qingyang sachets. *PLOS ONE*, 20(1), e0317447. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0317447>
- Masyhar, A., Purnawarman, P., Suryati, N., Setyarini, S., & Azam, M. (2026). The protection policies on predatory digital credit traps students: Lessons from Indonesia. *Journal of Human Rights, Culture and Legal System*, 6(1), 254–284. <https://doi.org/10.53955/jhcls.v6i1.862>
- Musafa'ah, S., Hadi, M. N., Maliki, M. A. A., & Ghuftron, M. (2025). Reframing Islamic family law through web-based tafsir: The case of nushuz in the Indonesian tafsir online. *Ulumuna*, 29(2), 666–700. <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujs.v29i2.1756>
- Mustofa, B. A. (2025). Reconstructing qiwāmah and wilāyah in the Shāfi'ī legal tradition: Toward a reform of Islamic family law in Indonesia. *Jurnal Mahkamah: Kajian Ilmu Hukum dan Hukum Islam*, 345–358. <https://doi.org/10.25217/jm.v10i2.6846>
- Muttaqin, M. Z., Izzi, A. I., Nazar, R. F., Arifin, S. W. T., & Sandra, M. Y. (2026). Family harmony in contemporary Islamic law: Ibn 'Āshūr's maqāsid perspective on marital rights and duties. *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review*, 5(1), 61–79. <https://doi.org/10.32332/milrev.v5i1.10480>
- O'Brien, W., & Maras, M.-H. (2024). Technology-facilitated coercive control: Response, redress, risk, and reform. *International Review of Law, Computers & Technology*, 38(2), 174–194. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600869.2023.2295097>
- Rogers, M. M., Fisher, C., Ali, P., Allmark, P., & Fontes, L. (2023). Technology-facilitated abuse in intimate relationships: A scoping review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 24(4), 2210–2226. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380221090218>
- Rubab, I., Salahuddin, A., Siddiqui, A., & Javed, N. (2026). Gendered household decision-making in Lahore: Different contextual interpretations of qawwam in Qur'anic verse 4:34. *Feminist Theology*, 34(2), 154–168. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09667350251391785>
- Sheikh, M. M. R., & Rogers, M. M. (2024). Technology-facilitated sexual violence and abuse in low and middle-income countries: A scoping review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 25(2), 1614–1629. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15248380231191189>
- Taccini, F., & Mannarini, S. (2024). Unveiling the traumatic impact of cyber dating abuse and offline intimate partner violence: Exploring the mediating role of adult attachment. *Scientific Reports*, 14(1), 21222. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-68759-z>
- Turner, J. R., Allen, J., Hawamdeh, S., & Mastanamma, G. (2023). The multifaceted sensemaking theory: A systematic literature review and content analysis on sensemaking. *Systems*, 11(3). <https://doi.org/10.3390/systems11030>