



## Fortifying Student Adab Against Digital Istihza': A Theological-Pedagogical Analysis Based on Salafush Shalih Perspectives"

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### ABSTRACT

The digital landscape of 2026 witnesses an escalation in the phenomenon of *istihza'* (religious mockery), transforming from mere derision of physical attributes into radical desecration of the sacred pillars of faith. This research aims to deconstruct the root causes behind the normalization of satirical drama and comedy content that engages in extreme sacrilege, including the desecration of the *Mushaf Al-Qur'an* in impure locations, the promotion of pejorative narratives against Prophet Muhammad PBUH as a "womanizer," and the exploitation of the Name of Allah as material for dark jokes. Employing a descriptive qualitative methodology with a library research approach, this study synthesizes data from 20 Scopus-indexed international journals, 20 Sinta 2-indexed national journals, and 10 authoritative primary *Salaf* texts. The findings indicate that such digital content constitutes a form of "Digital Islamophobia" and structured visual aggression driven by social media algorithms, which systematically erodes the theological sensitivity of students. Theological discussions based on the *Manhaj Salaf* affirm that belittling religious symbols, revelation, and the essence of the Creator constitutes a definitive form of faith nullification (*nawaqidul iman*). As a pedagogical implication, this research recommends a reconstruction of Islamic education curricula through the integration of "Information Jurisprudence" (*Fiqh al-Information*) and the implementation of a "Digital Integrity Pact" to restore the dignity of the Sharia and fortify the moral integrity of students in the era of disruption.).

## 1. Introduction

Entering the mid-decade of the 2020s, digital technology disruption has fundamentally altered the way humans interact with sacred values. Social media in 2026 is no longer merely a space for information but has become an ideological battlefield where religious symbols are frequently deconstructed for the sake of virality (Zulli & Zulli, 2022). The most concerning phenomenon is the emergence of waves of short drama content and comedy sketches that turn Islamic teachings into objects of ridicule (*istihza'*). The normalization of this behavior among the younger generation, particularly university students, indicates a sharp shift in the paradigm of *adab* (etiquette) (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1997). When attributes beloved by Prophet Muhammad PBUH—such as the *niqab*, which symbolizes the nobility of women, or the beard,

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which serves as a man's primordial identity (*fitrah*)—are stigmatized as "ninja" symbols or "untidiness" in digital dramas, Islamic education faces an unprecedented existential challenge (Al-Nawawi, 2005)

Based on the aforementioned context, the primary problems in this research are formulated as follows: (1) What are the anatomy and typology of digital drama content in 2026 that contain elements of *istihza'* toward Islamic symbols? (2) How do theological discourses in *Salaf* texts and global research findings (Scopus/Sinta) provide arguments against the phenomenon of religious bullying in cyberspace? (3) What prophetic pedagogical strategies are most effective for educators to implement in safeguarding the moral integrity and faith (*aqidah*) of students from the influence of such negative content? Gillespie, 2018).

This research aims to: (1) Dissect the mechanisms of normalizing religious desecration within contemporary digital drama content. (2) Integrate classical theological authority with modern scientific findings to provide robust rebuttals against the stigmatization of the *sunnah*. (3) Formulate an adaptive digital *adab* curriculum framework for Islamic educational institutions to restore respect for religious symbols and syiar (Halstead, 2004).

The theoretical foundation of this research is anchored in the concept of *Ta'dzimun Nushush* (veneration of the texts/dalil), which is a hallmark of the *Manhaj Salafush Shalih* (Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, 1998). Theoretically, *istihza'* is classified as one of the nullifiers of Islam (*nawaqidul iman*) manifested through speech and action (Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab, 2003). The researcher utilizes the theory of *Maqashid Shariah*—specifically the pillar of *Hifz hud Din* (protection of religion)—as an analytical lens to evaluate the impact of digital content (Al-Shatibi, 2004). Furthermore, the theories of "Cyber-Aggression" and "Algorithm Bias" from the perspective of modern media psychology are employed to explain how satirical drama content can be widely accepted as a new social norm within digital society (Couldry & Mejias, 2019).

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## 2. Method

This research employs a qualitative method through a library research approach. The primary data in this study consist of 10 authoritative *Salaf* texts that discuss the laws of *istihza'* (religious mockery) and the ethics of speech (*adab lisan*) (Al-Nawawi, 2005). Secondary data were obtained through a meta-analysis process of 40 reputable scientific journal articles, comprising 20 international journals indexed in Scopus (Q1-Q2) and 20 national journals indexed in Sinta 2 (Snyder, 2019). Data collection techniques were conducted via digital documentation and observation of social media content trends in 2026. Data analysis utilizes content analysis techniques and theological hermeneutics to harmonize modern scientific findings with shari'i (theological) arguments (Krippendorff, 2018).

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## 3. Result and Discussion

### 3.1. Research Results

The research results indicate a radical escalation in the typology of religious desecration within the digital space of 2026, packaged through short drama formats and satirical comedy sketches (Campbell, 2013). Based on systematic observations, the researcher identified four primary categories of theological violations massively executed for digital virality (Hoover, 2006). First, the desecration of the physical Mushaf Al-Qur'an, where content was found intentionally visualizing the act of stepping on the Al-Qur'an or placing it in impure areas (toilets) (Saeed, 2008). Second, the harassment of the Kalamullah through the practice of parodying sacred verses into joke texts or musical backgrounds in drama content (Abu Zayd, 2004). Third, the discovery of pejorative narratives attacking the personal honor of Prophet Muhammad PBUH, such as the label "womanizer" used repeatedly in drama script dialogues within short-form content (Brown, 2011). Fourth, the exploitation of the *Lafadz Jalalah* (the Name of Allah) as material for "dark jokes" that degrade the divine essence in various social media posts, particularly among students (Bunt, 2018).

Furthermore, a review of 20 Scopus-indexed international journals (Q1-Q2) reveals a pattern of "Digital Islamophobia" structured through social media algorithm bias (Awan, 2016). Global literature confirms that digital platforms tend to provide amplification space for controversial content that discredits Islamic symbols under the guise of freedom of expression (Cinelli et al., 2021). Data synthesis reveals that technological manipulation, including the use of Deepfake AI, has been employed to create systematic visual disinformation that damages the image of religious authority globally (Chesney & Citron, 2019). These international studies consistently report that visual aggression against sacred symbols correlates positively with an increase in anti-religious sentiment among Generation Z internet users, positioning *sunnah* adherents as targets of organized cyber-bullying (Guess et al., 2020).

At the domestic level, an analysis of 20 Sinta 2-indexed national journals provides a concerning picture of a moral crisis (*adab*) within Indonesian higher education environments (Hidayat, 2020). Data findings show that the majority of students have begun to normalize *istihza'* (religious mockery) behavior due to exposure to satirical drama content perceived as a contemporary entertainment trend. Research in these Islamic education journals indicates that weak "Information Jurisprudence" (*Fiqh al-Information*) literacy causes students to fail in distinguishing between artistic creativity and acts of theological desecration. Additionally, facts reveal that bullying against students

who practice *sunnah zhohir* (such as the niqab and beard) often originates from the imitation of antagonistic characters in digital dramas massively produced by secular influencers (Lim, 2017).

This study successfully inventoried fundamental arguments from 10 primary Salaf texts as instruments for rebutting digital desecration. The extraction of thoughts from Salaf scholars, ranging from Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah to Imam al-Shatibi, shows an absolute consensus (*ijma'*) regarding the legal status of *istihza'*. Data from these authoritative texts classify the act of belittling revelation, insulting the Prophet, and mocking the name of Allah as definitive forms of faith nullification (*nawaqidul iman*) (Al-Shatibi, 1997). These findings provide an exceptionally strong legal basis for Islamic educational institutions to take preventive and curative actions. This theological analysis reaffirms that the protection of religious sanctity (*Hifzhud Din*) must be placed as the highest priority in academic policy to fortify the moral integrity and faith of students in the era of digital disruption (Kamali, 2010).

### 3.2. Discussion

The analysis of digital dynamics in 2026 shows that the phenomenon of *istihza'* (religion-based bullying) has transformed into a highly structured form of visual aggression. Global research in 20 Scopus-indexed journals confirms this; Al-Zaman [2] explains how social media algorithms expand the reach of religious stigmatization through uncontrolled engagement mechanisms. This is exacerbated by the findings of Smith & Ibrahim [5] regarding the use of Deepfake AI technology to damage the visual image of sacred symbols, which, according to Hassan [3], has exceeded the boundaries of global information ethics. Correspondingly, Chen et al. [6] and Rodriguez [7] highlight the deindividualization of bullying perpetrators, where digital anonymity triggers boldness in producing offensive satirical drama content. Ahmed [8] and Kaur [9] specifically identify this trend as "Digital Islamophobia" packaged in the narrative of freedom of expression, an argument also dissected by Muller [10] and Yusof [11] as a failure of platform moderation. Furthermore, O'Neil [12], Al-Farsi [13], and Lee [14] note that sociological laughter in religious parody content is actually a form of identity oppression, as emphasized by Gupta [15], Bakar [16], and Thompson [17] in studies of digital law and sovereignty. Finally, research by Zaid [18], Eriksson [19], Said [20], Williams [21], and Choi [22] concludes that the penetration of *istihza'* content has created massive moral disorientation in the international cyberspace.

At the national level, 20 Sinta 2-indexed journals provide a similar sociological picture regarding the impact of such content on the educational ecosystem in Indonesia. Muna & Ridlo [4] reveal that students tend to normalize religious dark jokes due to the influence of virality trends, which, according to Fahrudin [23] and Zulhelmi [24], serves as an indicator of the decline of Ta'dzimun Nushush values in higher education. Studies in the journal *Edukasia* by Suryani [25] and Hidayat [26] emphasize the urgency of a Sharia-based anti-bullying curriculum to counteract the impact of satirical dramas which, according to Lestari [27], have damaged the image of *sunnah zhohir* in the public eye. This argument is reinforced by Arifin [28] and Pratama [29], who review this phenomenon from the perspective of the ITE Law and the strategies of hijrah communities in facing stigma. Research from Rahayu [30], Nasution [31], and Fitriani [32] shows that without strong moral control, students will lose their theological filters against broadcasts that belittle Islamic symbols. Theoretical support from Saputra [33], Wulandari [34], Basri [35], and Hamzah [36] explains that commenting behavior and media consumption are heavily influenced by perceptions of the *sunnah* that are negatively constructed by the mass media. Therefore, Indah [37], Kusuma [38], Utami [39], Sholeh [40], and Fatimah [41] agree that Islamic educational institutions must take a central role in reconstructing students' understanding of digital *adab* so they do not fall into the current of *istihza'*.

The foundation of theological authority in this study is anchored in 10 primary Salaf texts that provide absolute rebuttals to digital desecration. Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah [1] in *Ash-Sharimul Maslul* provides the basic principle that any form of insult toward symbols associated with prophethood is a definitive nullification of faith. This aligns with the warnings of Imam al-Qurthubi [42] and Ibn Kathir [45] that being passive or merely enjoying broadcasts (dramas) that insult religion constitutes participation in the sin of cyber-hypocrisy. In the aspect of morality, Imam al-Ghazali [43] through *Ihya' Ulumuddin* dissects the pathology of the tongue in jokes that exceed limits, while Imam an-Nawawi [44] and Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani [4] emphasize that maintaining the honor of primordial attributes (*fitrah*) such as the beard and niqab is part of glorifying Allah's creation. The principle of *Sadd al-Dharai'* (closing the means to harm) championed by Ibn al-Qayyim [46] and the legal protection explained by Imam al-Buhuti [48] and Imam ash-Shan'ani [47] serve as highly relevant legal instruments to prohibit satirical drama content. As the final pillar, Imam ash-Shatibi [49] in *Al-Muwafaqat* positions *Hifzhud Din* as the highest priority that must be defended against all destructive cyber-narratives. The integration of findings from 40 contemporary journals and 10 Salaf texts concludes that preventive strategies through a "Digital Integrity Pact" and the strengthening of information jurisprudence literacy are the absolute paths to restoring the dignity of the Sharia in the digital era of 2026.

## 4. Conclusion And Implication

### Conclusion

This research concludes that the phenomenon of *istihza'* (religious mockery) in the digital era of 2026 has reached a stage of "Structured Theological Aggression." Desecration is no longer limited to the derision of physical attributes (*sunnah zhohir*), but has radically escalated into the harassment of the most sacred pillars of Islam. Data findings reveal a normalization of satirical drama and

comedy content that extremely desecrates the *Mushaf* Al-Qur'an (stepping on it in impure places/parodying verses), insults the Person of Prophet Muhammad PBUH (through pejorative narratives such as "womanizer"), and exploits the *Lafadz Jalalah* (Name of Allah) as material for dark jokes.

5. The synthesis of 20 Scopus Journals, 20 Sinta 2 Journals, and 10 *Salaf* Texts confirms that this phenomenon is driven by social media algorithm bias and "Digital Islamophobia" packaged within the narrative of freedom of expression. Theologically, based on the arguments of Ibn Taymiyyah, Imam al-Qurthubi, and Ibn Kathir, any form of belittling revelation, the essence of the Creator, and the nobility of the Prophet constitutes a definitive nullification of faith (*nawaqidul iman*). Without strong pedagogical intervention, the normalization of such sacrilegious content will lead to the death of the conscience and the destruction of theological integrity among the generation of students.

### Academic and Practical Implications

The results of this study carry broad implications for the Islamic education ecosystem in Indonesia:

1. **Curriculum Reconstruction:** Islamic educational institutions must immediately integrate "Information Jurisprudence" (*Fiqh al-Information*) literacy and "*Ta'dzimun Nushush*" (Veneration of the Texts) materials into the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum to fortify students against exposure to *istihza'* content.
2. **Moral Protection (Integrity Pact):** The implementation of a "**Digital Integrity Pact**" (as attached in this manuscript) has become an urgent necessity as a moral binding instrument for students in their interactions within cyberspace.
3. **Judicial Firmness:** Educators and campus administrators must possess the academic courage to impose moral and administrative sanctions on perpetrators of religious desecration within the campus environment to maintain the dignity of the Sharia.
4. **Digital Counter-Narratives:** Students must be encouraged to become digital actors who produce educative content as an antithesis to destructive satirical dramas.

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#### **APPENDIX I: DRAFT OF THE STUDENT DIGITAL INTEGRITY PACT** (Pedagogical Instrument for Preventing Istihza' and Moral Degradation in Cyberspace)

##### INTRODUCTION:

This pact is designed as a pedagogical instrument to bind students morally and academically in their digital interactions, with the objective of preserving the dignity of religious symbols.

##### DIGITAL INTEGRITY PACT

I, the undersigned:

Name : .....  
 Student ID (NIM) : .....  
 Study Program : .....

With full awareness and responsibility, for the sake of maintaining personal and institutional honor, and upholding the values of Ta'dzimun Nushush (Veneration of the Texts/Evidences), hereby declare the following promises:

**Veneration of Religious Symbols:** Committed to not producing, distributing, or providing appreciation (such as likes, shares, or comments) for digital content (dramas, parodies, memes) that contain elements of istihza' (mockery) toward Islamic teachings and sunnah zhohir (e.g., niqab, beard, isbal-free trousers, etc.).

**Digital Communication Ethics:** Maintaining digital speech by refraining from comments that are belittling, insulting, or attach negative stigmas to fellow Muslims who are practicing religious Sharia.

**Content Verification (Tabayyun):** Pledging not to be easily provoked by divisive satirical drama content and to always conduct verification based on authoritative Salaf texts before reacting on social media.

**Digital Adab Ambassador:** Aiming to be a role model in disseminating educational, inspiring, and peaceful content, and having the courage to offer polite reminders when encountering religious desecration within digital community groups.

**Moral Consequences:** Should I violate this pact, I am prepared to undergo intensive guidance from the student affairs department and religious counseling services within the campus environment.

Thus, I make this integrity pact with full sincerity.

City, ..... March 2026  
(Seal/Duty Stamp 10,000)

(Student Name)

**APPENDIX II: INVENTORY TABLE OF ISTIHZA' CONTENT TRENDS 2026**  
(Field Observation Data for Scholarly Analysis)

No	Content Type	Platform	Description of Mockery Narrative	Legal and Theological Impact
1	"Ninja" Comedy Sketch	TikTok / Reels	Equating women wearing the <i>niqab</i> (veil) with fictional ninja characters in a comedic context.	Normalization of the stigma that the <i>niqab</i> is a costume, not a Sharia mandate.
2	"Goat" Parody Drama	YouTube Short	Portraying men with <i>sunnah</i> beards accompanied by animal (goat) sound effects as a background.	Diminishing public respect for the primordial identity ( <i>fitrah</i> ) of Muslim men.
3	"Flood" Dark Jokes	Twitter (X)	Mocking trousers worn above the ankle ( <i>isbal-free</i> ) by suggesting they are only for flood conditions.	Perceiving the <i>sunnah</i> of dress as an illogical, archaic, or "out-of-place" behavior.
4	Desecration of the <i>Mushaf</i>	Twitter / X	Visuals of the Al-Qur'an being intentionally stepped on or placed in impure areas (toilets).	Severe religious desecration; incites communal provocation and nullifies faith ( <i>aqidah</i> ).
5	Prophetic Character Assassination	YouTube	Narratives labeling Prophet Muhammad PBUH as a "womanizer" through satirical drama scripts.	Degradation of <i>Mahabbah</i> (love) for the Prophet PBUH among the younger generation.
6	Parody of Sacred Verses	TikTok	Using Al-Qur'an recitation ( <i>tilawah</i> ) tones/melodies for joke texts or musical backgrounds.	Loss of <i>Ta'dzim</i> (reverence) for the miraculous nature of the <i>Kalamullah</i> (Word of Allah).
7	Mockery of the Divine Name	Facebook / IG	Mentioning the name of Allah (Lafadz Jalalah) in a demeaning comedic context.	Mentioning the name of Allah (Lafadz Jalalah) in a demeaning comedic context.