

Mediation Based On Maqashid Syariah: A Dynamic Solution To Marital Conflicts In Indonesia

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received:

22-07-2026

Revised:

30-08-2026

Accepted:

08-09-2026

Keywords

Mediation, Maqashid
Syariah, Marital Conflict,
Islamic Family Law.

ABSTRACT

Marriage conflict remains a critical challenge at the South Jakarta Religious Court, a high-volume urban jurisdiction where conventional mediation often fails to yield sustainable outcomes. This study examines the operationalization, effectiveness, and implementation barriers of Maqashid Syariah-based mediation as an adaptive alternative for modern family dispute resolution. Employing a descriptive qualitative design, data were gathered through in-depth interviews with 15 key informants (judges, certified mediators, disputing couples, and legal experts), non-participatory observations of live caucus sessions, and documentary analysis of court settlement deeds (Akta Perdamaian) under PERMA No. 1 of 2016. The findings reveal that Maqashid Syariah is practically operationalized through caucus strategies that prioritize child welfare (hifzh al-nasl) and financial equity (hifzh al-mal), shifting mediation from rigid procedural compliance toward substantive justice. Couples undergoing this approach reported higher post-mediation satisfaction and lower post-divorce litigation rates. However, implementation is constrained by the absence of specialized Maqashid-based mediator training modules and unintegrated court guidelines. This study contributes an empirical framework that operationalizes abstract Islamic legal philosophy into concrete court-annexed mediation practices, offering policy recommendations for judicial reform in Indonesia.

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Introduction

Marriage conflict remains a critical challenge within the Islamic family law system in Indonesia, as reflected in the continuous surge of divorce cases across various jurisdictions. According to official statistical reports from the South Jakarta Religious Court (*Pengadilan Agama Jakarta Selatan*), divorce filings have exhibited a steady upward trajectory over the past three years, exceeding 4,500 cases annually (Pengadilan Agama Jakarta Selatan, 2023). Notably, contested divorce petitions (*cerai gugat*) initiated by wives significantly outnumber male-initiated divorce applications (*cerai talak*) by a ratio of nearly 3:1. This prevailing trend is driven by complex socioeconomic variables, primarily persistent marital disharmony (*perselisihan terus-menerus*), financial disputes, and escalating instances of domestic violence (Musyafaah et al., 2022).

To mitigate this growing social issue, mediation functions as a mandatory pre-litigation mechanism pursuant to Supreme Court Regulation (PERMA) No. 1 of 2016 concerning Mediation Procedures in Courts (Mahkamah Agung Republik Indonesia, 2016). Although designed to promote non-adversarial dispute resolution, conventional court-annexed mediation demonstrates a notably low success rate—frequently falling below 10% in major urban courts like South Jakarta. Recent studies critique this operational shortfall, arguing that court mediation has largely degraded into a rigid, procedural formality. Mediators predominantly focus on administrative compliance rather than addressing the underlying emotional, economic, and relational fractures between the disputing parties.

To overcome these structural limitations, *Maqashid Syariah* provides a dynamic philosophical framework centered on safeguarding five fundamental human interests: faith (*ad-din*), life (*an-nafs*), intellect (*al-aql*), lineage (*an-nasl*), and wealth (*al-mal*). Rather than approaching family disputes strictly through textual and formalistic legalism, a *Maqashid*-based framework operationalizes *maslahat* (public and individual welfare) to craft adaptive and substantive resolutions. Within marital conflict resolution, this perspective prioritizes child welfare and custody stability (*hifdh an-nasl*), equitable economic distribution and post-divorce maintenance (*hifdh al-mal*), as well as physical and emotional safety (*hifdh an-nafs*). Comparative research, such as Saifullah's (2023) evaluation of Sharia courts in Malaysia and Haneef and Razak's (2017) ethical reform model, indicates that incorporating higher objectives of Sharia enhances litigant satisfaction and fosters durable post-divorce arrangements.

Despite growing academic interest in *Maqashid Syariah*, a significant **research gap** remains. Existing literature predominantly treats *Maqashid Syariah* as an abstract theoretical concept or analyzes court mediation purely through normative procedural frameworks. Very few empirical studies examine how court-certified mediators operationalize *Maqashid* principles during actual high-conflict caucus sessions. Furthermore, while PERMA No. 1 of 2016 mandates mediation, it lacks an explicit framework or procedural guidelines for integrating Sharia values, leaving mediators without standardized tools or specialized training grounded in *Maqashid*.

The **novelty** of this study lies in its empirical evaluation of mediator practices and perspectives within the South Jakarta Religious Court through a *Maqashid Syariah* analytical lens. Moving beyond conventional formalistic evaluations, this research bridges the gap between normative Sharia philosophy and practical judicial mediation within a high-density urban court environment.

This study offers significant theoretical and practical contributions to the development of Islamic family law and judicial dispute resolution. **Theoretically**, it advances the discourse on *Maqashid Syariah* by shifting its application from abstract jurisprudential concepts into a practical, empirical methodology tailored for Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in modern family law contexts. **Practically**, the findings deliver

actionable policy recommendations for the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia (*Mahkamah Agung*), specifically providing a framework to reform mediator certification curricula and integrate *maslahat*-oriented mediation guidelines into future amendments of PERMA No. 1 of 2016.

Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to deeply understand the application of Maqashid Syariah-based mediation in the South Jakarta Religious Court. A qualitative approach was chosen because it enables the exploration of social and legal phenomena in a contextual manner, particularly in resolving complex marital conflicts. The South Jakarta Religious Court was selected as the research site due to the high volume of divorce cases it handles, making it a representative location to examine the dynamics of mediation within Islamic family law in an urban setting.

To obtain rich and relevant data, informants were selected using a purposive sampling strategy based on clear inclusion criteria. The study included six certified judges and mediators who possessed a minimum of five years of active practice at the South Jakarta Religious Court, alongside eight couples (16 individual litigants) who had completed the entire court-mandated mediation process under Supreme Court Regulation (PERMA No. 1 Year 2016) within the past year, representing both successful reconciliations and cases that proceeded to litigation.

Data collection was carried out through three primary, complementary techniques. In-depth, semi-structured interviews lasting 45 to 60 minutes were conducted with judges, mediators, and the disputing parties using tailored interview guides. Interviews with mediators and judges focused on their understanding and practical implementation of Maqashid Syariah principles in mediation sessions, whereas interviews with couples explored personal experiences and perceptions of fairness during the process. Saifullah (2023a) highlights that in-depth interviews are effective in uncovering aspects not revealed in official documents, such as the practical challenges of implementing Sharia-based mediation.

Document analysis was systematically conducted on official court mediation rulings, case files, and governing legal frameworks, particularly Supreme Court Regulation (PERMA) No. 1 of 2016 on Court Mediation Procedures. Analyzing these documents provided a baseline to assess the extent to which Maqashid Syariah principles have been formally integrated into settlement agreements. Additionally, direct, non-invasive participatory observations were conducted during live mediation proceedings to observe real-time interactions, mediator communication strategies, and the emotional dynamics between disputing parties.

Data collected from interviews, document analysis, and observations were analyzed using a thematic approach executed interactively across several stages. The analytical process began with verbatim transcription and data reduction to filter relevant information, followed by systematic coding and categorization into core thematic nodes, such as the preservation of lineage (*hifdh al-nasl*) and public interest (*maslahat*). This technique enabled the researcher to connect empirical data with theoretical frameworks, as suggested by Haneef and Razak (2017a), who highlighted the importance of thematic analytical approaches in examining the implementation of Sharia in legal systems.

To ensure data trustworthiness, credibility, and validity, this study employed source and method triangulation. Information gathered from interviews was cross-verified against official court records and observation field notes to minimize individual reporting bias. Furthermore, preliminary interpretations were validated through expert review discussions with senior scholars in Islamic family law to ensure conclusions aligned

consistently with the principles of Maqashid Syariah. Specifically, this study addresses three research questions: (1) How are the principles of Maqashid Syariah applied in the mediation process for marriage conflicts in the South Jakarta Religious Court? (2) To what extent is this approach effective in resolving conflicts? (3) What are the main challenges in its implementation?

Based on the literature review, the application of Maqashid Syariah in Islamic family law mediation emphasizes several key focuses that serve as the foundation for this study. Musyafaah et al. (2022) revealed that mediation based on the principle of *maslahat* (benefit) has proven effective in resolving family conflicts by providing fair solutions for all disputing parties. Similarly, Haneef and Razak (2017b) highlighted the crucial role of Maqashid Syariah in enhancing the efficiency and fairness of mediation, particularly in safeguarding children's rights and balancing the rights of spouses. These studies offer insights that Sharia values are not merely normative but also applicable in family law mediation.

The implementation of Sharia-based mediation in religious courts is a frequently discussed theme. Previous research emphasizes how *Al-Shulhu*, or peaceful reconciliation, is applied in religious court mediation to achieve holistic justice. Additionally, Saifullah (2023b) explained that in Malaysia, Sharia-based mediation has strengthened family conflict resolution through the holistic application of *maslahat* principles in the judicial system. However, these perspectives do not specifically address how similar implementations can be adapted within Indonesia's court context.

Cultural aspects also play a vital role in Maqashid Syariah-based mediation. The revitalization of Bugis-Mandar customs integrated with Sharia principles has been shown to resolve family conflicts in Indonesia. This approach demonstrates that collaboration between local values and Sharia can create solutions more relevant to the context of local communities. This aligns with broader perspectives comparing Sharia-based mediation practices in religious courts with modern mediation systems in other Muslim-majority countries, emphasizing the importance of adapting Sharia principles to contemporary legal challenges.

On the other hand, digitalization has also begun to influence the practice of Islamic family law mediation. Digitalization has been shown to improve the efficiency of Sharia-based mediation, particularly in expediting administrative processes and enhancing transparency. However, cultural and technical challenges remain significant obstacles to the implementation of digitalized mediation in certain regions. This study is relevant for understanding how technology can support Maqashid principles in resolving family conflicts.

From this review, several research gaps emerge that need to be addressed. First, empirical research on the application of Maqashid Syariah in family conflict mediation in Indonesia remains very limited, as most previous studies have focused on Southeast Asian contexts like Malaysia. Second, although the integration of local culture with Sharia values has been highlighted, empirical studies on its application in formal family conflict mediation within judicial bodies are still lacking. Third, while many previous studies discuss Maqashid principles theoretically, empirical evaluations of their effectiveness in formal mediation contexts are rarely conducted.

This study offers novelty through several contributions. First, it focuses on a local empirical analysis within the South Jakarta Religious Court to understand the dynamics of applying Maqashid Syariah in marriage conflict mediation in practice. Second, it examines the integration of local cultural values with Sharia principles to create more adaptive and relevant mediation solutions. Third, it aims to provide practical recommendations for improving mediator training and reforming Sharia-based mediation policies in Indonesia.

Thus, this research is expected to make a significant contribution by filling gaps in previous literature while offering actionable solutions to strengthen the Maqashid Syariah-based mediation system in Indonesia.

Results and Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that the implementation of Maqashid Syariah-based mediation in the South Jakarta Religious Court has provided a more adaptive solution for resolving marital conflicts compared to conventional mediation approaches. Based on interviews with mediators and judges, Maqashid Syariah principles such as the protection of life (*hifzh al-nafs*), lineage (*hifzh al-nasl*), and public welfare (*maslahat*) are explicitly integrated into the mediation process. These principles influence the way mediators provide recommendations, particularly in divorce cases involving children. For instance, mediators often guide couples to consider the emotional and social impact on their children before making a final decision regarding divorce..

Effectiveness of Maqashid Syariah-Based Mediation

Maqashid Syariah-based mediation has proven to be more effective in resolving marriage conflicts compared to normative approaches, which tend to be procedural. In this mediation process, the principle of *maslahat* (benefit) serves as the core strategy used by mediators to encourage couples to consider reconciliation as the best solution. This principle not only offers a legal perspective but also incorporates emotional, social, and spiritual considerations, which often play a critical role in marital conflicts.

According to interviews with mediators at the South Jakarta Religious Court, many couples initially determined to proceed with divorce eventually reconsidered after mediators guided them to reflect on the long-term consequences of divorce, especially on their children. For instance, couples are presented with scenarios highlighting the importance of family emotional stability and the social implications of divorce, such as children's emotional instability and difficulties in social adaptation. These findings align with Saifullah's (2023) research, which demonstrated that *maslahat*-based approaches increased reconciliation rates by up to 70% in similar cases in Malaysia, emphasizing the relevance of Syariah values in family mediation.

This approach also provides the necessary flexibility to address the complex dynamics of marital conflict. In several observed cases, mediators did not merely resolve surface-level disputes such as child custody or financial maintenance; they actively examined the underlying root causes of conflict, including communication breakdowns and misaligned expectations regarding domestic roles. For instance, in one observed caucus session, the mediator applied the principle of *maslahat* to guide a couple in developing healthier communication strategies, ultimately enabling them to reconcile and avoid divorce (Saifullah, 2023). This demonstrates that *Maqashid Syariah*-based mediation extends beyond resolving technical legal disputes to actively repairing relational dynamics and delivering sustainable outcomes.

Although reconciliation remains the primary objective of court-annexed mediation, a *Maqashid Syariah*-based framework also proves effective in cases where divorce is inevitable. Mediators employ the principle of *maslahat* to ensure that divorce settlements remain equitable and safeguard vulnerable parties, particularly women and children. In high-conflict cases involving domestic violence, mediators prioritize ensuring that wives receive appropriate post-divorce maintenance (*iddah* and *mut'ah*) and fair division of joint marital assets, while guaranteeing that children's custody and financial support are fully secured. As highlighted by Haneef and Razak (2017), integrating *Maqashid Syariah* enables

mediators to formulate dispute resolutions that satisfy formal legal mandates while simultaneously providing crucial social and psychological protection for all involved parties.

The effectiveness of this approach is also evident in the long-term benefits it provides. Couples who decide to reconcile through Maqashid Syariah-based mediation often report improvements in the quality of their relationship, particularly in communication and cooperation in parenting. In divorce cases, this approach facilitates a smoother transition for children by ensuring that their emotional and financial needs are adequately addressed. The application of Sharia values in mediation has been proven to create more humane and sustainable solutions, positively impacting all family members.

Furthermore, this approach aligns with Indonesia's socio-cultural context, where religious values play a significant role in family life. Maqashid Syariah-based mediation not only adheres to the principles of Islamic law but also meets the public's demand for more comprehensive and humane solutions. For instance, in cases involving conflicts among extended family members, mediators utilize a *maslahat* approach to emphasize the importance of maintaining good relations beyond the disputing couple. This helps foster broader social harmony..

Barriers to Implementation

Although Maqashid Syariah-based mediation offers an adaptive solution aligned with Islamic legal values, this study identifies several significant obstacles hindering its effective implementation. One of the primary challenges is the lack of understanding among many mediators regarding the fundamental principles of Maqashid Syariah. Based on interviews conducted with mediators in the South Jakarta Religious Court, only a small number of them have received formal training or possess a deep understanding of how to integrate Maqashid Syariah into mediation practices. Most mediators still rely on normative and procedural approaches, which tend to focus more on compliance with technical regulations rather than the substantive application of Syariah values.

This shortcoming aligns with the findings of Haneef and Razak (2017), who emphasized the need for continuous training for mediators to enhance their capacity to practically understand and apply Syariah principles. Such training should not only address theoretical aspects but also include case simulations and direct applications, enabling mediators to comprehend how Maqashid Syariah can be used to resolve conflicts holistically. The lack of such training becomes a major barrier to ensuring that mediation outcomes reflect the justice and benefits that are the core objectives of Maqashid Syariah.

In addition to limited understanding, this study also found that the absence of clear regulatory guidelines on integrating Maqashid Syariah into the mediation process is another significant challenge. The Supreme Court Regulation (PERMA) No. 1 of 2016 on Mediation in Courts provides a legal framework for conducting mediation but does not specifically regulate the application of Syariah values in the process. As a result, the implementation of Maqashid Syariah principles often depends on the personal initiative of mediators. This creates inconsistencies in mediation practices, where some mediators may be more skilled at applying Syariah principles, while others tend to follow a more limited normative approach.

Beyond regulatory constraints, the lack of awareness among disputing parties poses a significant barrier to implementation. Many couples undergoing court-annexed mediation fail to comprehend how Maqashid Syariah principles can facilitate more equitable and mutually beneficial outcomes. This issue is primarily driven by the limited pre-mediation orientation provided by religious courts or individual mediators prior to official proceedings. As highlighted by Saifullah (2023) in the Malaysian context, structured pre-mediation educational sessions—including clear explanations of Sharia-based conflict

resolution principles—substantially improve litigant participation rates and overall mediation success.

Another critical challenge stems from socio-cultural resistance to non-litigious dispute resolution. In many urban communities, court mediation is still perceived merely as a procedural formality to be fulfilled before advancing to full trial litigation. This entrenched perception creates severe psychological barriers, leading disputing parties to remain reluctant to genuinely commit to the mediation process, ultimately diminishing the practical efficacy of Maqashid-based approaches.

These institutional and socio-cultural obstacles are further compounded by structural constraints, specifically limited human resources and excessive caseloads in religious courts. Mediators frequently operate under intense time pressure to dispose of a high volume of cases within strict court deadlines, which severely restricts their capacity to conduct comprehensive, *maslahat*-oriented caucus sessions. This constraint not only degrades the qualitative depth of mediation but also hinders the operationalization of Sharia values. Overcoming these systemic challenges requires targeted institutional capacity building and strategic resource allocation across judicial bodies.

To address these challenges, this study recommends several strategic steps. First, the development of comprehensive and continuous mediator training programs should be prioritized. These training sessions should include an in-depth understanding of Maqashid Syariah, adaptive mediation techniques, and real case studies. Second, regulations such as PERMA No. 1 of 2016 need to be revised to incorporate specific guidelines on the use of Shariah values in the mediation process. Third, religious courts should educate disputing parties about the benefits of Maqashid Syariah-based mediation before the process begins, enabling them to be more receptive to this approach.

Positive Impact on Couples and Children

The implementation of Maqashid Syariah-based mediation in the South Jakarta Religious Court provides not only legal solutions but also significant positive impacts on couples and children involved in marital conflicts. Based on interviews with couples who participated in this process, the majority revealed that mediation grounded in the principle of *maslahat* helped them better understand the social and emotional consequences of divorce in a holistic manner. Couples who were previously fixated on internal conflicts began to consider the effects of their decisions on their children, who are often the most vulnerable party in a divorce. The mediation process offered them a new perspective on the importance of maintaining family stability as part of the effort to protect the interests of children, in line with the principle of *hifzh al-nasl* (protection of progeny) within Maqashid Syariah.

For instance, one couple decided to postpone their divorce and attempt to repair their relationship after the mediator emphasized the importance of emotional stability for their children's psychological development. The mediator presented *maslahat*-based arguments, stressing that the decision to divorce could have long-term impacts on children, including emotional distress, reduced academic performance, and difficulties in forming social relationships in the future. This focus on *maslahat* highlights the advantages of Maqashid Syariah-based mediation compared to conventional mediation approaches, which tend to focus solely on resolving legal disputes.

Research by Musyafaah (2022) supports these findings, demonstrating that mediation rooted in Sharia principles offers more humane and sustainable solutions for family conflicts. Sharia values, particularly those emphasizing *maslahat*, provide a foundation for decisions that are not only legally sufficient but also satisfy the emotional and social needs of the involved parties. In marital disputes, this approach functions not merely as a dispute resolution mechanism, but as a profound reconciliation tool—especially for families with

children.

In addition to benefiting couples, Maqashid Syariah-based mediation also has a positive impact on children by ensuring their rights are protected. For instance, in cases where divorce is unavoidable, mediators pay special attention to custody arrangements, child support, and equitable visitation schedules. This approach prioritizes not only the emotional stability of the child but also establishes a framework for parents to remain actively involved in their children's lives post-divorce. A study by Saifullah (2023) in Malaysia produced similar findings, showing that mediation based on Sharia principles enhances parental satisfaction with custody agreements because decisions reflect justice and benefit (*maslahat*).

Observations from this research further revealed that children whose parents underwent Maqashid Syariah-based mediation tend to experience less emotional stress compared to those whose parents went through litigation. These children are better shielded from the prolonged effects of conflict because mediation helps parents reduce tension and build better communication. In some cases, mediators also consider the children's perspectives to ensure that decisions align with their needs. This approach aligns with the principles of Maqashid Syariah, which emphasize the protection of vulnerable individuals' rights.

Beyond its direct effects on couples and children, Maqashid Syariah-based mediation also positively influences the broader social dynamics of families. This approach enables couples to understand the extended family's role in supporting household stability, an aspect often overlooked in litigation processes. Mediators frequently guide couples to seek support from their extended families as part of reconciliation efforts. This aligns with the findings of Haneef and Razak (2017), who highlighted that Sharia values are not only relevant to individual relationships but also play a vital role in fostering harmony within the broader community.

Despite these substantial benefits, the findings indicate that the success of *Maqashid Syariah*-based mediation remains heavily contingent upon the mediators' individual skills and depth of understanding regarding Sharia principles. In several instances, disputing couples reported that a mediator's limited comprehension of *Maqashid* values hindered the session from achieving optimal, substantive outcomes. Consequently, this study underscores the urgent need for intensive, structured training programs for court mediators to enhance their capacity in operationalizing Islamic legal philosophy during mediation. Elevating mediator competencies will ensure that the tangible benefits of Sharia-based dispute resolution are realized more broadly – not only for the couples involved, but also for child welfare and family stability within the wider society.

Conclusion

This study evaluates the application, effectiveness, and implementation challenges of *Maqashid Syariah*-based mediation in resolving marital conflicts at the South Jakarta Religious Court. Addressing the first research question, the findings demonstrate that *Maqashid Syariah* principles are operationally integrated during mediation through caucus strategies that prioritize *hifzh al-nafs* (protection of psychological well-being), *hifzh al-nasl* (safeguarding children's rights and custody), and *maslahat* (seeking equitable, long-term family welfare). Second, regarding effectiveness, this approach proves highly adaptive in mitigating adversarial tensions; couples who achieved reconciliation or amicable settlement reported greater satisfaction compared to those undergoing full litigation, supporting the role of Sharia values as practical conflict-resolution mechanisms. Third, the primary implementation challenges stem from two main obstacles: the lack of standardized, practical training for mediators on operationalizing *Maqashid* principles beyond procedural

formalities, and the absence of explicit guidelines within PERMA No. 1 of 2016 regarding the integration of Islamic legal philosophy into formal court mediation.

These findings offer key theoretical and practical implications for Islamic family law and dispute resolution. Theoretically, this research bridges the gap between normative jurisprudence and empirical court practice by demonstrating that *Maqashid Syariah* functions not merely as an abstract philosophical framework, but as an applied analytical tool that enhances procedural and substantive justice in urban religious courts. Practically, the study highlights the urgent need for Supreme Court policy reforms, specifically the development of specialized *Maqashid*-based training modules and benchbooks for court mediators. Strengthening regulatory frameworks and mediator competencies will enable Indonesian religious courts to deliver more humane, child-centric, and sustainable family dispute resolutions. Future research should expand to multi-site comparative studies across diverse regional courts and conduct longitudinal evaluations on the long-term impact of Sharia-based mediation on child post-divorce development.

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