



MUSLIM COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF SHARIA BOUNDARIES IN INTERACTIONS WITH SIBLINGS-IN-LAW IN PAHANDUT DISTRICT

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Abstract

Interaction with siblings-in-law occupies a sensitive position in Muslim family life, particularly in extended-family households where daily proximity is common. Although Islamic law clearly categorizes siblings-in-law as non-mahram, social practice often treats them as close family members, resulting in interaction patterns that blur sharia boundaries. This study examines how Muslim communities in Pahandut District understand and practice boundaries of interaction with siblings-in-law, and the factors that shape these practices. Using a qualitative field-based approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews with community members and a local religious figure, supported by document analysis. The findings show that community understanding of interaction boundaries varies significantly, influenced by kinship traditions, living arrangements, and uneven levels of religious literacy. Many informants acknowledge religious obligations in general terms but encounter practical difficulties in applying specific fiqh rules related to aurat observance, seclusion, and everyday interaction within shared domestic spaces. Analysis based on the principle of *sadd al-dharā'i* indicates that preventive legal reasoning is weakly internalized in daily family practices. Interaction patterns that are socially normalized are often maintained despite their potential to open the way to fitnah, not due to conscious rejection of Islamic norms but because of cultural familiarity and structural constraints. These findings highlight the need for more contextual forms of religious education that address family interaction explicitly, and contribute to discussions on social fiqh by linking Islamic legal principles with lived community realities.

Keywords: *Sharia Boundaries; Siblings-in-Law; Non-Mahram; Sadd Al-Dharā'i; Muslim Family Life*

A. Introduction

Islamic law provides detailed guidance on social interaction within the family, including relations between men and women whose kinship is formed through marriage. In Islamic jurisprudence, siblings-in-law are classified as non-mahram, a status that entails specific legal consequences concerning aurat observance, physical contact, and the prohibition of seclusion (*khalwah*) (Idris, 2016; Purkon, 2023; Oktafiani & Maulidia, 2025). Despite this legal classification, everyday family life often treats siblings-in-law as close relatives due to shared domestic space and kinship intimacy, resulting in interaction patterns that tend to blur these boundaries.

Normative Islamic sources address this issue with particular emphasis. The Qur'an instructs believing women to guard their aurat in the presence of non-mahram men, including relatives formed through marriage (Q.S. al-Nūr:31; RI, 2019). This injunction is reinforced by a well-known prophetic tradition narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim, in which the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) warned, “*al-ḥamw al-mawt*”. Classical scholars, most notably al-Nawawī, interpreted this statement as a preventive legal warning rather than a literal moral accusation, emphasizing the heightened potential for fitnah arising from unrestricted interaction with in-laws, particularly within domestic settings where access and familiarity are normalized (An-Nawawi, 2022; Hasmand, 2019). Contemporary studies on this hadith further underline its relevance as a framework for understanding moral risk and family vulnerability in modern Muslim contexts (Bashir Fatmal et al., 2024).

From the perspective of Islamic legal theory, this warning is closely connected to the principle of *sadd al-dharā'i'*, which requires preventing actions that may lead to prohibited outcomes even when those actions are not inherently unlawful. Within ushul fiqh, *sadd al-dharā'i'* functions as a preventive legal mechanism aimed at protecting moral integrity and social order (Ash-Shiddieqy, 1990; Munawwaroh, 2018). Its application in family relations emphasizes caution toward practices that may gradually open the way to fitnah, jealousy, or domestic conflict, particularly when legal boundaries are weakened through habitual social acceptance (Sarumpaet & Tanjung, 2024; Mahmudi & Khaira, 2022).

Empirical studies indicate that this normative framework often encounters negotiation within lived social contexts. In many Muslim societies, strong traditions of extended-family cohesion shape the interpretation of religious norms, frequently prioritizing social harmony and familial trust over strict legal boundaries (Rozario, 2011). Studies on Islamic social etiquette further demonstrate that cultural normality can dilute awareness of non-mahram boundaries when legal knowledge is mediated through informal religious learning rather than structured fiqh education (Mustafa et al., 2024; Miko, 2025).

In Indonesia, this tendency is reinforced by structural and cultural factors such as limited residential space and multi-generational co-residence. Research on local religious practices shows that while participation in communal worship and religious gatherings remains strong, detailed understanding of fiqh-based social boundaries within the household is often uneven (Safitri et al., 2024). Pahandut District in Palangka Raya City reflects these broader dynamics. As a multi-ethnic urban area characterized by dense kinship networks, Pahandut provides a social setting in which interaction with siblings-in-law is routine and widely perceived as unproblematic, despite its legal implications (Ratnasari et al., 2025).

Against this background, this study examines how Muslim communities in Pahandut District understand and practice boundaries of interaction with siblings-in-law, and how these understandings are shaped by cultural traditions, religious literacy, and living arrangements. Using the principle of *sadd al-dharā'i'* as an analytical framework,

the study explains why preventive legal reasoning, despite its strong normative foundation, is weakly internalized in everyday family practice. By grounding Islamic legal analysis in empirical field data, this study contributes to the development of social fiqh that seeks to bridge doctrinal coherence with lived Muslim experience (Kurniawan & Herlina, 2022; Zuhrah et al., 2025).

B. Methods

This study employed a qualitative field-based research design with a descriptive–analytical orientation to examine community understanding and practice of Islamic interaction boundaries involving siblings-in-law. A qualitative approach was adopted because the study focuses on meanings, perceptions, and everyday practices that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measurement. The research was conducted in Pahandut District, Palangka Raya City, Central Kalimantan, an urban area characterized by multi-ethnic composition and strong extended-family living arrangements, where interaction with siblings-in-law commonly occurs within shared domestic space.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews and document analysis. Primary data consisted of interviews with four informants: three community members who had direct experience of daily interaction with siblings-in-law, and one local religious figure actively involved in providing religious guidance in the area. Informants were selected using purposive sampling based on relevance to the research focus and direct lived experience of the phenomenon under study. This number of informants was considered sufficient, as the study prioritized depth of understanding rather than representativeness, in accordance with qualitative research principles. Ethical considerations were observed throughout the research process, including informed consent, confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms, and voluntary participation.

Data analysis was conducted through stages of data reduction, data presentation, and verification. Interview findings were first organized to identify recurring patterns related to perceptions of non-mahram boundaries, everyday interaction practices, and the social factors shaping those practices. These findings were then interpreted by combining empirical field data with normative Islamic legal reasoning, using the principle of *sadd al-dharā'i'* as an analytical and normative lens. This approach allows doctrinal explanation to accompany the discussion of interview findings, ensuring that legal analysis remains grounded in lived social experience rather than abstract prescription. Data credibility was strengthened through triangulation between interview data, relevant documents, and normative Islamic sources.

C. Results and Discussion

Based on the results of interviews, observations, and document studies in Pahandut District, Palangka Raya City, it was found that the understanding of the Muslim community regarding the limits of interaction with in-laws still varies, influenced by local

traditions, religious literacy, and modernization. The principle of *sadd al-dhara'i*, which emphasizes preventing actions that could potentially lead to violations of Sharia, serves as the main framework for analyzing this phenomenon (Ash-Shiddieqy, 1990). This section will outline findings related to community understanding, Islamic legal concepts regarding limits of interaction with in-laws, as well as factors influencing these practices, followed by implications and recommendations to enhance Sharia awareness amid the socio-cultural dynamics of Pahandut District. In this study, the author obtained varying results.

1. Muslim Community Understanding in Pahandut District Regarding the Boundaries of Interaction with In-Laws

Interviews with three community members and one religious figure in Pahandut District revealed a diversity of understanding among the Muslim community regarding the boundaries of interaction with in-laws. For example, NH, aged 21 years, said that,

“In our family, in-laws are like biological siblings. We live in the same house, so it’s natural for us to often chat together or eat together without a hijab. I feel there’s no need to cover the aurat too much because we are already like family. I only recently found out that there are boundaries with in-laws in Islamic law.” When the author asked whether, after knowing that an in-law is a non-mahram, she would cover her aurat, Ima stated that it would be difficult to implement because they meet every day and her in-law lives in the same house.

NH’s statement reflects a misperception of the status of in-laws as mahram, which within the framework of *sadd al-dhara'i* indicates a weak preventive awareness in maintaining syariat boundaries. This contradicts Surah An-Nur verse 31, which requires women to cover their aurat in front of non-mahram men. The informant’s ignorance of the hadith “الْحَمُّ الْمَوْتُ” (*the in-law is death*), which warns of the dangers of uncontrolled interaction, shows low religious literacy, as highlighted by Zainal Ilmi. *Sadd al-dhara'i* demands efforts to prevent potential fitnah, even if no actual violation has occurred. In this case, the culture of living under one roof and family closeness become factors that encourage distortion of understanding (Muhammad Hafis et al., 2024). This is also reinforced by Mustafa et al. (2024) who found that the pressure of familial culture often weakens the application of syariat boundaries in social interaction. Then there was AS, a 35-year-old housewife, who also revealed:

“Every day my male in-law drives me to the market or family events because my husband is busy working. In my opinion, this is not a problem because we trust each other, and I consider my in-law like my own younger brother. I never think anything strange.”

She also mentioned that she is “*already polite enough*” even though she does not always wear a hijab in front of her in-law. This practice violates the prohibition of khalwat in Islam, which has the potential to trigger fitnah, such as spousal jealousy or negative perceptions from society.

This mindset shows the existence of social rationalization toward free interaction with in-laws. Although based on trust within the family, it still opens opportunities for

khalwat and violations of aurat boundaries. From the perspective of *sadd al-dhara'i*, this is a form of allowing actions that risk causing mafsadat (moral damage), due to the absence of firm restrictions (Sarumpaet & Tanjung, 2024). As Miko (2025) emphasized in his study, cultural practices that appear socially normal need to be re-examined through fiqh values so as not to blur syariat boundaries. In contrast to MH, aged 21 years, who also stated that,

“Previously I did know that there are syariat boundaries in Islam in interacting with in-laws, but when my older sister got married and started living in the house with my parents, I found it difficult to apply them, such as wearing a hijab continuously from morning till night, because it is hard to implement in a small space like a house, even though I know it is sinful to show hair or aurat to a non-mahram.”

MH's represents the group of people who cognitively understand the law but fail to apply it due to spatial pressure and social environment. This shows that structural factors (*such as limited space*) and social pressure in multigenerational homes make consistent application of syariat difficult. *Sadd al-dhara'i* in this case provides the basis that although physically unable to avoid interaction, minimum preventive measures must still be taken, such as maintaining clothing and spatial restrictions (Mahmudi & Khaira, 2022). This is also reflected in the findings of Zuhrah et al. (2025) who stated that local traditions can loosen syariat boundaries if not critiqued through Islamic legal education.

Zainal Ilmi, as a religious figure who actively conducts pengajian and religious guidance in Pahandut District, confirmed these findings by stating,

“Many people in Pahandut actively participate in religious activities, such as weekly pengajian or congregational prayer, but their understanding of the laws of interaction with non-mahram, including in-laws, is still very limited. They often consider in-laws as part of the close family, thus ignoring the obligation to cover aurat or avoid interactions that potentially violate syariat, such as being alone in the house or traveling together without a mahram.” He added, “Local traditions that emphasize closeness in extended families, such as strong silaturahmi or living under one roof with parents-in-law and in-laws, often become triggers for non-compliance with syariat boundaries. Many are unaware that in-laws are non-mahram, so the rules of covering aurat and the prohibition of khalwat are often ignored.”

Zainal Ilmi also highlighted low religious literacy as the main factor worsening this situation. According to him,

“Although the Pahandut community is active in religious activities, their access to in-depth religious education is still limited, especially among urban communities who are busy with work and exposed to modern lifestyles. Many only understand Islamic teachings superficially, such as the obligations of prayer or fasting, but lack understanding of fiqh muamalah, including the rules of interaction with non-mahram.”

From the perspective of *sadd al-dhara'i*, Zainal Ilmi's view affirms that non-compliance with syariat boundaries, such as covering aurat or avoiding *ikhtilat*

(*unrestricted mixing*) with in-laws, can open opportunities for fitnah that damage family harmony. He emphasized that the principle of *sadd al-dhara'i* requires the community to take preventive actions, such as ensuring interaction with in-laws is carried out within syariat boundaries, for example by maintaining physical distance, avoiding being alone, and complying with the obligation to cover aurat. Zainal Ilmi also criticized the lack of role of religious figures in providing consistent education on this issue. He stated, "As someone who understands and knows about this, I feel responsible for continuously reminding the congregation." He suggested a more contextual approach to address this problem, such as integrating syariat values into the already-rooted tradition of silaturahmi in society. This approach can be done by educating the community that maintaining closeness and harmonious family relations can still be done without violating syariat boundaries, such as the obligation to cover aurat or avoid khalwat with non-mahram. For example, through religious lectures or group discussions, the community can be invited to understand ways of interacting that comply with syariat without reducing the value of togetherness. In addition, the involvement of religious figures and local communities in conveying this message can increase community acceptance, so that syariat can be applied naturally and in accordance with local cultural dynamics.

Zainal Ilmi's statement affirms that although the community participates in religious activities, understanding of social fiqh, especially in non-mahram family relations, is still very limited. This indicates the weakness of internalizing the value of *sadd al-dhara'i* in the lives of urban communities, where modern lifestyles, free interactions, and local cultural pressures mutually reinforce non-compliance with syariat law. In line with Kurniawan & Herlina (2022), Islamic legal literacy needs to be instilled from within the family, not only through general religious sermons. Field observations reinforce these findings, with many families in Pahandut living under one roof with in-laws, so interactions without syariat boundaries, such as not wearing a hijab in the family room, have become commonplace.

2. Concept and Boundaries of Interaction with In-Laws According to Islamic Law

In-laws refer to kinship relations established through marriage bonds. According to the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), an in-law is the sibling of a husband or wife. In the context of Islamic law, in-laws fall into the category of mahram mu'aqqat, namely those who are temporarily forbidden to marry due to certain reasons, such as an existing marriage bond. If that reason no longer exists, for example due to divorce or death, then the status of mahram also disappears. In the Al-Munawwir dictionary, the term in-law is translated as shilfun for males and shilfatun for females. In-laws are also known by the term al-hamwu, which refers to the husband's brother or the husband's close relatives, such as cousins or other relatives who have close kinship ties. (Oktafiani & Maulidia, 2025).

In Islamic teachings, a woman who is to be married must not have a mahram relationship with the man who will marry her, whether it is a mahram that is mu'abbad (*permanent*) or mu'aqqat (*temporary*). A permanent mahram permanently prevents a

woman from becoming a man's wife, whereas a temporary mahram only prevents marriage under certain conditions (Muwaffika et al., 2025). If the condition causing the temporary prohibition no longer exists, then marriage becomes permissible. According to Imam Nawawi, based on the consensus of linguists, the term hamwu refers to all relatives from the husband's side, such as father, uncle, husband's brother, husband's nephew, husband's cousin, and so on (Al-Faifi & Yahya, 2013). In the Hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), “الْحَمُّ الْمَوْتُ” (*Al-hamwu is death*), Ibn Hajar explained that seclusion (*khalwah*) with hamwu can cause religious damage if immorality occurs. Even such a violation can lead to severe punishment such as stoning, and can cause the destruction of the husband-wife relationship, especially when the husband feels jealous because of that seclusion (Kholilurrahman et al., 2024).

Islamic law regulates the boundaries of interaction with in-laws as non-mahram through the Qur'an, Hadith, and the views of scholars. Surah An-Nur verse 31 commands women to cover their aurat in front of non-mahram men, including in-laws, except under certain conditions involving permanent mahram (Idris, 2016).

وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِجُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوِ التَّبَعِينَ غَيْرَ أُولِي الْأَرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَى عَوْرَتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ

Meaning: And say to the believing women to lower their gaze and guard their private parts and not expose their adornment except that which [necessarily] appears thereof and to wrap [a portion of] their headcovers over their chests and not expose their adornment except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons, their women, that which their right hands possess, or those male attendants having no physical desire, or children who are not yet aware of the private aspects of women. And let them not stamp their feet to make known what they conceal of their adornment. And repent to Allah, O believers, that you may succeed. Q.S. An-Nur verse 31 (RI, 2019).

Furthermore, in the Qur'an, Surah An-Nisa verse 23 clearly lists the parties that are mahram, but in-laws are not included in it. Thus, in fiqh, in-laws are not mahram and it is still possible to marry them if separation occurs between husband and wife, such as in cases of divorce or death. This provision is not merely a formal rule, but rather a form of protection from Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala to preserve honor and family integrity from the potential for slander, such as the emergence of jealousy, domestic conflict, or violation of sharia boundaries. Therefore, it is important for the community to understand this legal status so that they can apply sharia boundaries, such as covering the aurat and avoiding seclusion, in interactions with in-laws. By obeying these rules, families can be

protected from negative impacts that can disturb the harmony and purity of kinship relations, while simultaneously strengthening Islamic values in daily life.

حُرِّمَتْ عَلَيْكُمْ أُمَّهَاتُكُمْ وَبَنَاتُكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ وَأَخْتٌ أَخَاكُمْ وَبَنَاتُ الْأَخِ وَبَنَاتُ الْأُخْتِ وَأُمَّهَاتُكُمُ الَّتِي أَرْضَعْنَكُمْ وَأَخَوَاتُكُم مِّنَ الرَّضَاعَةِ وَأُمَّهُتِ نِسَائِكُمْ وَرَبَائِبُكُمُ الَّتِي فِي حُجُورِكُم مِّن نِّسَائِكُمُ الَّتِي دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَإِنْ لَّمْ تَكُونُوا دَخَلْتُمْ بِهِنَّ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَحَلَائِلُ أَبْنَائِكُمُ الَّذِينَ مِنْ أَصْلَابِكُمْ وَأَنْ تَجْمَعُوا بَيْنَ الْأُخْتَيْنِ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ سَلَفَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا

Meaning: Prohibited to you [for marriage] are your mothers, your daughters, your sisters, your father's sisters, your mother's sisters, your brother's daughters, your sister's daughters, your [milk] mothers who nursed you, your sisters through nursing, your wives' mothers, and your step-daughters under your guardianship [born] of your wives unto whom you have gone in – but if you have not gone in unto them, there is no sin upon you – and the wives of your sons who are from your [own] loins, and that you take [in marriage] two sisters simultaneously, except for what has already occurred. Indeed, Allah is ever Forgiving and Merciful. Q.S. An-Nisa verse 23 (RI, 2019).

The Prophet Muhammad SAW. said in a hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari, Muslim and others.

«عَنْ عُقْبَةَ بْنِ عَامِرٍ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «إِيَّاكُمْ وَالْذُّخُولَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ». فَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ أَرَأَيْتَ الْحَمَوَ قَالَ: «الْحَمَوُ الْمَوْتُ».

From 'Uqbah bin 'Amir, he said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said, "Beware of entering upon women." A man from the Ansar said, "O Messenger of Allah, what do you think about the in-law?" He replied, "The in-law is death." H.R. Al-Bukhari (no. 5232) and Muslim (no. 5653). (Sunnah, n.d.)

Based on that hadith, in-laws have greater potential to cause fitnah than unrelated men (*ajnabi*) who have no family relationship. In-laws can often access a brother's wife or niece more freely, even being alone without suspicion because they are considered family (Oktafiani & Maulidia, 2025). However, scholars conclude that in-laws are not mahram, so the prohibitions on seclusion, touching, or exposing the aurat in front of them still apply. Great potential for fitnah can arise if there is no supervision, even though the in-law is not dangerous. This hadith aims to preserve the moral purity of the Muslim community by preventing situations that could give rise to temptation or damage. This hadith emphasizes the importance of adhering to sharia boundaries in social interactions between men and women who are not mahram, in order to maintain honor and piety (Bashir Fatmal et al., 2024). Therefore, the Prophet Muhammad SAW. reminded his ummah to always be careful in interacting with in-laws.

Al-Laits bin Sa'd explained that *al-hamwu* refers to the husband's brother or the husband's close relatives, such as cousins and the like. Ibn Hajar quoted An-Nawawi stating that linguists agree that *al-hamwu* includes the husband's relatives, such as father, uncle, brother, nephew, cousin, and others. Conversely, *al-ukhtani* refers to the wife's relatives, while *al-ashhar* (in-laws through children) is used for relatives from both sides.

However, Abu ‘Ubaidah, Ibn Faris, and Ad-Dawudi defined al-hamwu more narrowly, namely only the husband’s father. Ibn Faris added that the husband’s father is *al-hamwu* for the wife, just as the wife’s father is al-hamwu for the husband (Hasmand, 2019). An-Nawawi affirmed that,

الْحَمُّ هُوَ أَقَارِبُ الزَّوْجِ سِوَى أَبِيهِ وَوَلَدِهِ فَإِنَّ الْأَبَ وَالْوَلَدَ مُحَرَّمٌ لِزَوْجَتِهِ فَيَجُوزُ لَهُمَا الْخُلُوءُ بِهَا وَلَا يُوصَفَانِ بِالْمَوْتِ وَإِنَّمَا الْحَمُّ هُوَ أَخُوهُ وَإِنِّ أَخِيهِ وَعَمُّهُ وَإِنِّ عَمِّهِ وَمَا أَشْبَهَ ذَلِكَ مِنْ غَيْرِ الْمَحَارِمِ.

“Al-hamwu is the husband’s relatives other than his father and his son, because both of them are mahram to his wife, so it is permissible for them to be alone with her, and they are not described as death. Rather, al-hamwu is his brother, his nephew, his uncle, his cousin, and the like from those who are not mahram.” (Yahya, n.d.).

Al-Ashmu’i stated that this opinion is in line with the narration quoted by Ath-Thabari, Al-Khaththabi, and Al-Khalil, and is strengthened by the statement of Sayyidah Aisha. The hadith in question refers to the prohibition of seclusion with the husband’s relatives who are not mahram, such as in-laws, because they are not included in the category of permanent mahram. In that hadith, the Messenger of Allah (*peace and blessings be upon him*) stated that being alone with non-mahram, including the husband’s relatives other than father or son, can be likened to “*al-maut*” (*death*), because it has the potential to open the way to fitnah or sin. On the other hand, the husband’s father and son are mahram to the wife, so interaction is permitted without the restrictions of seclusion or the obligation to strictly cover the aurat. This opinion affirms the importance of maintaining sharia boundaries in interactions with in-laws to prevent potential violations, while simultaneously reinforcing the understanding that only permanent mahram are exempted from this rule. Therefore, educating the public about the status of mahram and non-mahram, as well as its sharia implications, is an important step to ensure family interactions remain in accordance with Islamic teachings. (Oktafiani & Maulidia, 2025)

In Pahandut District, the application of sharia boundaries to interactions with in-laws shows inconsistency and does not conform to the concept of Islamic law. Interviews with three members of the Pahandut community revealed that people consider in-laws as “*close family*,” so they do not comply with the obligation to cover the aurat or the prohibition of seclusion. Within the framework of *sadd al-dhara’i*, this practice risks opening the way to fitnah, such as jealousy or family conflict. Observations show that the habit of not covering the aurat at home in front of non-mahram complicates the implementation of sharia, affirming the need for contextual education.

The legal exposition from the Qur’an, Hadith, and the opinions of scholars shows that in-laws are not mahram, so interaction with them is subject to the same rules as with *ajnabi*. In the context of *sadd al-dhara’i*, neglect of the prohibition of being alone, not covering the aurat, and free interaction with in-laws, even though it occurs in a family environment, is still regarded as a path toward greater potential damage. This is exacerbated by entrenched misconceptions, as well as the lack of emphasis from religious

leaders and educational institutions on matters considered “*already normal*” in family practice.

D. Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that interaction boundaries between siblings-in-law in Pahandut District are largely shaped by everyday family habits rather than by explicit understanding of Islamic legal norms. Although respondents generally acknowledge religious obligations in a broad sense, detailed fiqh considerations regarding non-mahram relations are rarely applied consistently in domestic settings. The perception of siblings-in-law as “close family” functions as a social justification that normalizes practices such as relaxed aurat observance and permissive interaction within shared living spaces.

This condition reflects a persistent gap between normative doctrine and social practice. Siblings-in-law remain non-mahram, and the legal consequences attached to this status are clear within classical and contemporary fiqh discourse. The principle of *sadd al-dharā’i’* helps explain why seemingly ordinary forms of interaction may carry latent risks when preventive caution is absent. In the context examined, preventive legal reasoning tends to be overshadowed by cultural familiarity and structural living arrangements, rather than by conscious resistance to religious norms. These findings add to discussions on social fiqh by illustrating how Islamic legal principles are negotiated within everyday family life. The findings suggest that general moral instruction alone is insufficient to address this issue, as the problem lies not in rejection of Islamic law but in its partial and uneven internalization. Further research involving different social settings or comparative communities would help clarify how interaction norms within the family are shaped by varying combinations of legal knowledge, cultural practice, and spatial conditions.

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