

WHEN WORDS KILL: ISLAMIC LEGAL REFLECTIONS ON CYBERBULLYING-INDUCED SUICIDE

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Abstract: *This article explores the phenomenon of cyberbullying that leads to the victim's death, particularly suicide driven by severe psychological distress, especially in light of the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI), which has increased the potential for anonymous, automated, and large-scale digital abuse, all examined through the lens of Islamic law. The study adopts a qualitative approach using content analysis of Islamic legal sources such as the Qur'an, Hadith, and the opinions of scholars from major schools of thought. The main focus is to determine the classification of this crime within the Islamic legal framework and the appropriate form of punishment for perpetrators of digital bullying. The findings reveal that death resulting from cyberbullying does not warrant the application of qisas punishment due to the presence of doubt (syubhah) in the evidentiary process, which nullifies the imposition of qisas, just as it does with hudud punishments. Therefore, cybercrimes that culminate in suicide should be addressed through diyah or ta'zir punishments, which grant judicial authorities the discretion to impose penalties based on public interest and contemporary needs. This study highlights the necessity of contemporary ijthad in dealing with digital crimes in line with the principles of justice and prevention in Islamic law.*

Keywords: Cyberbullying, Suicide, Islamic Law, Murder, Stress

Introduction

Suicide is one of the most complex and tragic public health issues worldwide, claiming hundreds of thousands of lives each year and leaving a profound impact on families and communities (World Health Organization [WHO], 2024). Globally, an estimated 740,000 individuals die by suicide annually equivalent to one death every 43 seconds. Although the global age-standardized suicide mortality rate has declined by nearly 40% over the past three decades, from about 15 deaths per 100,000 population to 9 per 100,000, this suggests that prevention and intervention efforts have borne some success (Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, 2025). Data also indicate that men are more than twice as likely to die by suicide compared to women, although women are 49% more likely to attempt suicide (Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, 2025).

This global trend is also reflected in Malaysia, where suicide rates have shown an alarming increase. The Department of Statistics Malaysia (2024) reported a sharp rise in suicide deaths from 641 cases in 2020 to 1,068 cases in 2023 an increase of almost 67% within three years. In terms of ratios, Malaysia's suicide mortality rate rose from 2.0 deaths per 100,000 population in 2020 to 3.2 deaths per 100,000 in 2023 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2024). Selangor recorded the highest number of cases (305), followed by Kuala Lumpur (135), Johor, and Penang (123) in 2023 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2024). These statistics underscore the urgent need to understand the drivers of this increase and to formulate more effective prevention strategies.

One significant contributing factor is the growing prevalence of cyberbullying. Empirical studies demonstrate that victims of cyberbullying face heightened risks of emotional distress, depression, and, in some cases, suicidal behavior (Van Geel et al., 2018). In Malaysia, the NHMS 2018 report revealed an increasing tendency toward suicide among youth, identifying cyberbullying as one of the triggers (FamilyHealthUM, 2024).

The advent of artificial intelligence (AI), particularly generative AI, has further transformed the landscape of cyberbullying, introducing more sophisticated and difficult-to-detect forms of harassment. Previously, cyberbullying largely involved the circulation of humiliating texts or images. Today, however, AI technologies can create highly convincing and manipulative content, enabling automated, repeated, and targeted attacks. For instance, Hinduja (2023) describes emerging forms of AI-driven bullying, such as dogpiling, where victims are overwhelmed with derogatory and hateful comments generated by programmed chatbots, and report brigading, which involves the malicious mass-reporting of a user's account to cause suspension or bans despite no actual violations. AI-generated voice technologies have also been exploited through vishing (voice phishing), which mimics an individual's voice to deceive victims into disclosing personal information or authorising fraudulent financial transactions. These forms of harassment accelerate the scale of attacks, hinder detection by automated monitoring systems, and impose severe psychological and emotional impacts on victims.

Moreover, deepfake technology using AI to generate hyper-realistic fake images or videos has emerged as a dangerous tool for bullying. Victims' faces can be manipulated into pornographic or humiliating content, severely damaging reputations. A case reported in Johor illustrates this risk: nearly 40 students and alumni of a secondary school were alleged victims of AI-generated pornographic images (Devi, 2025; Hashim, 2025). Such incidents highlight how deepfakes and AI editing are being weaponised to publicly humiliate victims, prompting police intervention. These cases confirm that AI-driven cyberbullying is no longer a hypothetical threat but a

pressing reality that demands innovative prevention and detection mechanisms in line with technological advancements.

Given the tragic consequences of cyberbullying, there is a pressing need to examine its implications under Islamic law, particularly in cases leading to suicide. In Islamic jurisprudence, acts that result in another person's death whether directly or indirectly carry serious legal consequences, potentially invoking *qisās* (retributive justice) or *diyah* (blood compensation). Determining whether cyberbullying induced suicide constitutes intentional or quasi-intentional homicide requires rigorous analysis grounded in the principles of Islamic criminal jurisprudence. Key issues include the perpetrator's intent, the causal link between online harassment and the victim's suicide, and whether the psychological pressure exerted can be construed as a form of *al-qatl bi-sabab* (indirect killing).

Despite the growing body of research on cyberbullying and suicide within psychology and criminology, Islamic legal scholarship remains largely silent on the juridical implications of cyber-induced deaths. This lacuna is particularly pressing in the digital age, where psychological harm inflicted online can be as lethal as physical aggression. The classical typologies of homicide *al-qatl al-'amd*, *shibh al-'amd*, and *al-qatl al-khaṭa'* were formulated in a pre-digital context that presumed tangible, physical acts of killing. However, emerging cases of suicide induced by persistent online bullying challenge these traditional boundaries. Thus, a reinterpretation of homicide within Islamic criminal jurisprudence is necessary to ensure that the principles of justice (*'adl*) and the protection of life (*hifẓ al-naḥs*) remain responsive to contemporary realities.

Accordingly, this study explores, from the perspective of Islamic law, the legal implications of cyberbullying that leads to suicide. It aims to assess whether such acts can be adjudicated under *qisās* or *diyah* by engaging contemporary interpretations of Islamic jurisprudence and classical *fiqh* principles. In light of the rising threat of cyberbullying and its devastating consequences, developing a coherent Islamic legal framework is crucial for crafting effective interventions, protecting human dignity, and ensuring justice for victims and their families.

Literature Review

This literature review synthesises scholarship across three central themes underpinning this study: (i) the phenomenon of cyberbullying and its link to suicide, (ii) Islamic legal perspectives on cyberbullying, and (iii) the conceptualisation of homicide and *al-qatl bi-sabab* (indirect killing) within Islamic criminal jurisprudence. The first subsection examines the rising incidence of online bullying that leads to severe psychological distress, depression, and, in some cases, suicide, drawing on psychological and empirical research. The second subsection briefly outlines Islamic legal perspectives on cyberbullying. The third subsection discusses the classification of homicide in Islamic law, including intentional, quasi-intentional, and accidental killing. While psychological and legal research have examined the mental health impact of cyberbullying, Islamic legal scholarship has yet to systematically theorise its status as a potential cause of death systemically; whether, and under what conditions, it may be classified as homicide within the digital age. This conceptual and doctrinal gap motivates the present study.

Cyberbullying and Suicide

Cyberbullying is a form of repeated aggression perpetrated through digital technologies. It involves deliberate actions intended to harm or harass another individual via online platforms

such as social media, text messaging, or internet forums (Ardiyani & Muhdi, 2021). Definitions of cyberbullying highlight two key elements: intentionality and the use of digital communication tools that enable harmful information to be widely disseminated distinguishing it from traditional bullying, which often occurs through physical interactions. Cyberbullying is therefore characterised as a persistent form of cruelty marked by an imbalance of power between perpetrator and victim. Offenders deliberately target victims, intending to inflict deep psychological and emotional harm (Englander et al., 2018).

The effects of cyberbullying are often more severe than those of conventional bullying, as its psychological consequences can persist longer and, in some cases, prove more damaging. Research demonstrates that victims of cyberbullying frequently experience heightened anxiety, depression, and loneliness symptoms that may not be as prevalent among victims of physical bullying (Mitchell et al., 2016; Fadhli et al., 2022). These experiences affect multiple aspects of victims' lives, including their emotional stability and social functioning. As such, understanding the long-term implications of cyberbullying is critical in justifying the need for more effective interventions (Elçi & Seçkin, 2016).

The relationship between cyberbullying and suicidal behaviour has become a central focus in psychological and sociological research. Consistently, studies show that victims of cyberbullying are at heightened risk of emotional distress, depression, and, in some cases, suicidal ideation or attempts (Van Geel et al., 2018). Gini et al. (2021) further confirm that the psychological effects of cyberbullying include anxiety, post-traumatic stress, and suicidal thoughts. Victims often report feelings of shame, social isolation, and helplessness, all of which contribute to deteriorating mental health and, in extreme cases, suicide (Van Geel et al., 2018). Kim et al. (2021) emphasise that these emotional consequences can be particularly acute among female victims.

Several high-profile cases highlight the tragic outcomes of cyberbullying. Megan Meier, who died by suicide in 2006 following bullying on MySpace, and Amanda Todd, who took her life in 2012, illustrate how cyberbullying can escalate into fatal outcomes. These cases also compelled authorities to consider whether perpetrators could face charges such as involuntary manslaughter. In some U.S. states, legislation has been enacted to prosecute cyberbullies on the basis of the consequences of their actions, even in the absence of physical violence or weapons (Hallmark, 2022).

In Malaysia, data from the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2017 indicated that nearly 10% of youth reported suicidal ideation, with some cases linked to experiences of cyberbullying (NHMS, 2018, as cited in FamilyHealthUM, 2024). The NHMS 2018 report also revealed an increasing tendency toward suicide among youth, identifying cyberbullying as a significant contributing factor (FamilyHealthUM, 2024).

This situation is further exacerbated by the reluctance of many victims to seek professional help, even when aware of their deteriorating mental health. This reluctance is often driven by social stigma surrounding mental illness and fear of being labelled or judged negatively by society (Ng, 2024; LSE Southeast Asia Blog, 2024). Such barriers worsen the negative impacts of cyberbullying, as victims are denied the psychological support that could otherwise mitigate the harm they experience.

Islamic Legal Ruling on Cyberbullying

From the perspective of Islamic law (syar'), cyberbullying i.e., deliberate actions intended to harm or abuse others via online platforms such as social media, text messaging, or internet forums is unequivocally prohibited (haram) and condemned. This ruling is grounded in Surah al-Hujurāt (49:11), which articulates Islamic social ethics and commands believers to avoid conduct that undermines harmony and brotherhood:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُ قَوْمٌ مِّنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّنْ نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُنَّ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الْإِسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ ۚ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ۝۱۱﴾ [الحجرات: 11]

Meaning: «O believers! Do not let some 'men' ridicule others, they may be better than them, nor let 'some' women ridicule other women, they may be better than them. Do not defame one another, nor call each other by offensive nicknames. How evil it is to act rebelliously after having faith! And whoever does not repent, it is they who are the 'true' wrongdoers (11)»

Three core prohibitions are emphasised here: ridicule/derision, exposing faults, and using derogatory labels. These prohibitions safeguard personal dignity and social cohesion, prevent hatred and enmity, and cultivate a harmonious, compassionate society grounded in mutual respect central to the perfection of faith. In the digital era, these teachings are acutely relevant: cyberbullying commonly involves repeated derision, humiliation, and shaming, now amplified by artificial intelligence (AI).

Generative AI enables the creation of persuasive, manipulative, and difficult-to-detect content synthetic comments, images, and deepfake videos that degrade victims' dignity (Hinduja, 2023). Documented AI-mediated harms include harassment and cyberbullying, hate speech, deepfakes, catfishing, sextortion, doxing and privacy violations, dogpiling and report brigading, as well as identity theft and fraud (Hinduja, 2023). Such capabilities intensify the scale and speed of abuse and complicate automated detection, thereby aggravating psychological and emotional harm. In this light, Surah al-Hujurāt (49:11) provides a normative anchor for ethical digital conduct aligned with Islamic values.

Consequently, advancements in technology, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), have not only intensified the methods and strategies employed in cyberbullying but have also markedly heightened the threat to victims' emotional and psychological well-being. The cumulative exposure to persistent harassment and reputational harm can engender severe psychological outcomes, including an increased susceptibility to suicidal ideation and, in extreme cases, suicidal behavior. Such developments underscore the urgent need for scholarly attention to the interplay between emerging technologies and mental health vulnerabilities in the context of digital abuse.

While the ayah in Surah al-Hujurāt (49:11) explicitly prohibits online humiliation and verbal abuse, most Islamic legal discussions have yet to examine their implications when such acts lead to death. The absence of a clear doctrinal framework on whether sustained digital harassment may constitute *al-qatl bi-sabab* (indirect killing) reveals a significant lacuna within contemporary Islamic legal thought. By contrast, modern legal systems have begun to hold cyberbullies criminally accountable for suicides (e.g., *Commonwealth v. Michelle Carter*,

Hallmark, 2022). This disparity underscores the need for a contextualised *ijtihād* grounded in classical *uṣūl al-fiqh* principles of causation (*asbāb*) and criminal intent (*al-qaṣd al-jinā'ī*).

Homicide in Islamic Law

In Islam, unlawful killing is a grave sin. Allah SWT says:

﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ أَنْ يَقْتُلَ مُؤْمِنًا إِلَّا خَطَاً ۚ وَمَنْ قَتَلَ مُؤْمِنًا خَطَاً فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ وَدِيَةٌ مُسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَصَدَّقُوا ۚ فَإِنْ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَدُوٍّ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ وَإِنْ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِيثَاقٌ فَدِيَةٌ مُسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ وَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ ۖ فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ تَوْبَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا﴾ [النساء: 92]

Meaning: «It is not lawful for a believer to kill another except by mistake. And whoever kills a believer unintentionally must free a believing slave and pay blood-money to the victim's family unless they waive it charitably. But if the victim is a believer from a hostile people, then a believing slave must be freed. And if the victim is from a people bound with you in a treaty, then blood-money must be paid to the family along with freeing a believing slave. Those who are unable, let them fast two consecutive months as a means of repentance to Allah. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise(92)»

Unlawful killing is also listed among the “seven destructive sins” as affirmed in a well-known Prophetic ḥadīth:

اجْتَنِبُوا السَّبْعَ الْمُوبِقَاتِ، قَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ وَمَا هُنَّ؟ قَالَ: الشِّرْكُ بِاللَّهِ، وَالسِّحْرُ، وَقَتْلُ النَّفْسِ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ، وَأَكْلُ الرِّبَا، وَأَكْلُ مَالِ الْيَتِيمِ، وَالتَّوَلَّى يَوْمَ الرَّحْفِ، وَقَذْفَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ الْغَافِلَاتِ.

Meaning: "Keep away from the seven fatalities." It was asked: "What are they, O Messenger of Allah?" He (PBUH) replied, "Associating anything with Allah in worship (i.e., committing an act of Shirk), sorcery, killing of one whom Allah has declared inviolable without a just cause, devouring the property of an orphan, the eating of usury (Riba), fleeing from the battlefield and accusing chaste believing women, who never even think of anything touching their chastity."

(al-Bukhārī (no. 2766) and Muslim (no. 89)

While there is consensus (*ijmā'*) on the prohibition and gravity of unlawful killing, jurists differ on typology. The Mālikī school commonly classifies killings into intentional and accidental (Aleisy, 1989). The Ḥanafī school (al-Kasānī, 1986) identifies five categories: intentional, quasi-intentional, accidental, *similar to accidental*, and indirect killing. These can, however, be reconciled to three principal categories, consistent with the Shāfi'ī and the authoritative Ḥanbalī positions (al-Buhūtī, 1968; al-Ramlī et al., 1984):

Categories of Homicide	Description
Intentional Killing (<i>al-Qatl al-'Amd</i>):	Deliberate killing using an instrument or act ordinarily lethal (e.g., sharp or heavy implements). Qīṣās (retaliatory punishment) applies, subject to the heirs' right to pardon in exchange for <i>diyah mughallaḥah</i> (aggravated blood-money). In the Shāfi'ī school, <i>kaffārah</i> (expiation) is also required.
Quasi-Intentional Killing (<i>Qatl Shibh al-'Amd</i>):	Intent to harm (not to kill) using means not ordinarily lethal (e.g., striking with a stick), resulting in death. The ruling is <i>diyah mughallaḥah</i> borne by the 'āqilah (male agnates) plus <i>kaffārah</i> . (The Mālikī school treats this as intentional.)
Accidental Killing (<i>al-Qatl al-Khata'</i>):	Death occurs without intent to kill or harm (e.g., mistaken target). The ruling is <i>diyah mukhaffafah</i> (light blood money) plus <i>kaffārah</i> .

Jurists (*fuqahā'*) also distinguish between acts that cause death directly (*mubāsharah*) and those that cause death indirectly (*al-qatl bi-sabab*). *Mubāsharah* refers to actions that immediately and directly result in death, such as stabbing or striking a victim until death occurs. By contrast, *sabab* denotes acts that indirectly lead to death, such as confining a person in conditions that inflict suffering ultimately causing death. The majority of jurists from the Mālikī, Shāfi'ī, and Ḥanbalī schools hold that qīṣās (retaliatory punishment) may be imposed on perpetrators of indirect killing in the same manner as direct killing, provided that the causal factor clearly leads to death and exerts a strong, proximate effect for example, where false testimony results in a victim's execution ('Aleisy, 1989; al-Buhūtī, 1968; al-Ramlī et al., 1984).

Concerning the implications of *kaffārah* (expiation), the Shāfi'ī school consistently maintains that intentional killing, whether carried out directly or indirectly, requires *kaffārah*, based on the principle of *al-qiyās al-awlā* (a fortiori analogy) (al-Ramlī et al., 1984). However, some ambiguity exists within the Ḥanbalī and Mālikī schools concerning this obligation. Certain authorities affirm its requirement, such as 'Abd al-Wahhāb (1999) in *al-Nukat*, Ibn Qudāmah (1969) in *al-Mughnī*, and Ibn Muflīh (1997) in *al-Mubdi*. Nevertheless, the dominant position (*mashhūr*) of both schools, as recorded by Muḥammad 'Aleisy (1989) and al-Buhūtī (1968), is that no *kaffārah* is imposed for intentional killing. To harmonise these apparently conflicting positions, a balanced view suggests that if indirect intentional killing occurs with intent to kill, qīṣās applies without *kaffārah*. If, however, death results without intent to kill, the perpetrator is liable to pay *diyah* (blood money) and perform *kaffārah*. In general, the argument advanced by those requiring *diyah* is supported by the Qur'ānic verse:

﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ أَنْ يَقتُلَ مُؤْمِنًا إِلَّا خَطَاً، وَمَنْ قَتَلَ مُؤْمِنًا خَطَاً فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ وَدِيَّةٌ مُسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ يَصَدَّقُوا، فَإِنْ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَدُوٍّ لَكُمْ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ، وَإِنْ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ مِيثَاقٌ فَدِيَّةٌ مُسَلَّمَةٌ إِلَى أَهْلِهِ وَتَحْرِيرُ رَقَبَةٍ مُؤْمِنَةٍ، فَمَنْ لَمْ يَجِدْ فَصِيَامُ شَهْرَيْنِ مُتَتَابِعَيْنِ تَوْبَةً مِّنَ اللَّهِ، وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ٩٢﴾ [النساء: 92]

Meaning: «It is not lawful for a believer to kill another except by mistake. And whoever kills a believer unintentionally must free a believing slave and pay blood-

money to the victim's family unless they waive it charitably. But if the victim is a believer from a hostile people, then a believing slave must be freed. And if the victim is from a people bound with you in a treaty, then blood-money must be paid to the family along with freeing a believing slave. Those who are unable, let them fast two consecutive months as a means of repentance to Allah. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise. (92)»

This evidence demonstrates that *kaffārah* is obligatory in all forms of accidental or mistaken killing, without distinction between direct and indirect acts. By implication (*mafhum al-mukhālafah*), the verse indicates that no *kaffārah* applies to intentional killing. On this basis, indirect killing committed without intent to kill is subject to both *diyah* (blood money) and *kaffārah*, as it resembles accidental killing. Conversely, indirect killing carried out with intent to kill is treated as intentional homicide, warranting *qisās* (retaliatory punishment) without *kaffārah*. In other words, *kaffārah* is required in cases of indirect killing only where the causal factor is weak, does not amount to *mubāsharah* (direct action), and is undertaken without a definite intent to kill for example, digging a pit or providing something that inadvertently results in death.

According to the Ḥanafī school, indirect killing does not fall within the categories of intentional, quasi-intentional, or accidental homicide; rather, it is treated as a fifth category distinct from these three and from killings “similar to accidental” (Ibn ‘Ābidīn, 1966). For them, the penalty is payment of *diyah* by the *‘āqilah* (the male agnatic relatives of the perpetrator), while no *kaffārah* is imposed, as there was no intent to kill. In this view, the perpetrator is regarded as a killer only in terms of civil liability (*ḍamān*) for compensation, not in terms of sin or penal rulings.

Against this rich legal backdrop, the study finds that Islamic criminal jurisprudence (*fiqh al-jināyāt*) on the issue of cyberbullying leading to suicide remains limited. Classical *fiqh* typically categorises homicide into intentional (*al-qatl al-‘amd*), quasi-intentional (*shibh al-‘amd*), and accidental (*al-qatl al-khaṭa’*). Intentional killing requires a proven intent to kill, usually inferred from the use of an instrument ordinarily capable of causing death, or an act customarily fatal. In cases of cyberbullying, however, death occurs through sustained psychological and emotional pressure arising from online assaults that drive the victim to suicide, rather than through direct physical acts or lethal instruments. Thus, further study is necessary to determine whether cyber-attacks and sustained harassment can be legally analogised to a “lethal instrument” within the framework of Islamic law.

More broadly, despite the detailed classifications in Islamic jurisprudence, scholarly engagement on whether cyberbullying-induced suicide may be subsumed under intentional, quasi-intentional, or accidental homicide remains very limited. In intentional homicide, the law requires evidence of intent, usually inferred through the use of lethal instruments or inherently fatal acts. By contrast, in cyberbullying cases, death results from prolonged psychological and emotional distress inflicted by digital attacks. Such acts involve neither direct physical assault nor tangible instruments. Accordingly, further juristic inquiry is essential to assess whether cyberbullying can be categorised as a form of indirect killing that carries effects equivalent to direct homicide.

Synthesising the above, three critical observations emerge:

- i. Psychological studies confirm the causal link between cyberbullying and suicide but stop short of attributing legal culpability.
- ii. Islamic legal writings prohibit verbal abuse but rarely extend the discussion to its criminal or homicidal implications, leaving a gap between moral and penal discourse.
- iii. Classical fiqh elaborates on *al-qatl bi-sabab* but within physical or tangible contexts; it does not yet address causation through psychological pressure or digital aggression.

Therefore, the intersection between these three domains; psychological harm, digital abuse, and fiqh al-jināyāt remains underdeveloped. Few, if any, Islamic legal studies have critically examined whether cyberbullying-induced suicide can be analogised to qatl bi-sabab. This study thus fills that gap by synthesising modern causation theory with fiqhī typologies of homicide, aiming to determine whether digital aggression can amount to indirect killing under Islamic law.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research methodology grounded in systematic document analysis. The study adopts a normative and doctrinal framework, focusing on the evaluation of legal texts to reconstruct Islamic criminal law perspectives on contemporary issues, particularly those not explicitly addressed by classical scholars, such as cyberbullying-induced suicide.

Data Collection

Data were collected through systematic document analysis from multiple authoritative sources. Primary sources encompassed classical Islamic legal texts (kutub al-fiqh) from the four major schools of jurisprudence, namely Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali, with particular attention to works addressing homicide, criminal intent, and indirect killing. Key classical texts consulted included al-Kasani's *Badai' al-Sanai'*, al-Buhuti's *Kashshaf al-Qina'*, al-Ramli's *Nihayah al-Muhtaj*, Ibn Abidin's *Radd al-Muhtar*, and Ibn Qudamah's *al-Mughni*. The Qur'an and authentic hadith collections, particularly Sahih al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim, served as foundational scriptural sources for establishing legal principles and prohibitions related to verbal abuse, dignity, and the sanctity of life.

Contemporary academic papers addressing cyberbullying, suicide, mental health, and legal accountability were retrieved from databases including Google Scholar, JSTOR, and ProQuest. Articles published primarily between 2016 and 2025 were prioritised to capture recent empirical findings and emerging technological developments, particularly those concerning artificial intelligence-driven harassment. Relevant legal cases from common law jurisdictions, such as *Commonwealth v. Michelle Carter*, were examined to provide comparative perspectives on criminal liability in cyberbullying cases. Additionally, statistical reports from the World Health Organization, the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, and the Department of Statistics Malaysia were consulted to contextualise the prevalence and severity of suicide and cyberbullying in Malaysia.

The selection of materials followed specific inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure methodological rigour. Included materials comprised primary Islamic legal texts authored by recognised classical and contemporary scholars, peer-reviewed academic articles addressing cyberbullying and its psychological impacts, legal cases involving digital harassment leading

to suicide, fatwas and scholarly opinions on digital ethics, and official statistical data on suicide rates. Materials available in Arabic, English, and Malay were considered to capture diverse scholarly and empirical perspectives. Conversely, non-scholarly opinion pieces, materials lacking proper attribution or scholarly rigour, duplicate sources, and sources promoting harmful content were excluded from the analysis to maintain the quality and reliability of the data corpus.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed using a three-pronged analytical approach. First, descriptive analysis was employed to elucidate the phenomenon of cyberbullying-induced suicide by identifying key themes, concepts, and principles within both Islamic legal texts and contemporary psychological literature. This involved careful reading and documentation of relevant passages addressing criminal intent, causation, and the classification of homicide in Islamic jurisprudence. Second, inductive analysis was utilised to derive general conclusions from specific data by identifying patterns and recurring themes across multiple sources. This process involved initial coding of textual data into thematic categories such as intent to kill, indirect killing, and the role of psychological harm in causing death. Legal principles relevant to cyberbullying, including the presumption of innocence (*istishab al-'adam al-asli*) and the nullification of hudud punishments in the presence of doubt (*shubhah*), were systematically identified and synthesised into coherent analytical frameworks. Third, a comparative analysis was conducted to assess and contrast various scholarly views across different *madhahib*. This included comparison of positions regarding the definition of intentional homicide, the role of criminal intent in establishing guilt, and the applicability of qisas, diyah, and ta'zir punishments. Contemporary legal reasoning from common law jurisdictions was also compared with Islamic legal principles to illuminate similarities and differences in addressing digital-age crimes.

Coding and Categorisation

A systematic coding process was employed to organise and interpret the textual data. The first cycle involved open coding to identify initial themes and concepts emerging from classical fiqh texts and contemporary studies. Categories such as *al-qasd al-jinai* (criminal intent), *al-qatl bi-sabab* (indirect killing), *shubhah* (doubt in evidence), and *al-'udwan* (malicious aggression) were established as core analytical units. Subsequently, axial coding was conducted to establish relationships between these categories and to understand how different juristic concepts interrelated in assessing cyberbullying as a potential form of homicide. For instance, the relationship between the use of lethal instruments in classical fiqh and the psychological harm inflicted through cyberbullying was explored to determine whether digital harassment could be analogised to indirect killing. Finally, selective coding was performed to identify core categories and develop a theoretical framework that meaningfully addressed the research questions. This iterative process allowed for the refinement of analytical categories and ensured that the emerging themes were grounded in both classical legal doctrine and contemporary realities.

Validation

To ensure rigour and validity of the findings, several validation strategies were employed. Triangulation was utilised through cross-verification of findings across multiple Islamic legal sources representing different *mazhab*, as well as comparison with contemporary psychological and legal scholarship. This ensured that conclusions were not based on isolated references or singular interpretations but reflected a balanced understanding of juristic diversity and empirical evidence. An audit trail was maintained through systematic documentation of

analytical decisions and interpretations, including the recording of specific textual citations, justifications for categorising acts as intentional or indirect killing, and the rationale for preferring certain juristic opinions over others. Where applicable, the study engaged with established scholarly debates, such as whether qisas can be applied in cases of doubt, and provided reasoned arguments grounded in classical and contemporary sources. The study also acknowledged limitations in establishing definitive causal links between cyberbullying and suicide, reflecting the inherent complexity of proving intent and causation in digital contexts.

Methodological Justification

The choice of a normative-doctrinal methodology is justified as Islamic legal studies are inherently textual and authoritative in nature. This aligns with Chynoweth (2008), who emphasized that doctrinal research focuses on the analysis of existing law through primary and secondary sources, and with Zulfahmi (2020), who highlighted that normative approaches in Islamic legal research are essential for contextualising classical texts to derive relevant rulings for contemporary challenges such as cyberbullying. The normative-doctrinal approach enables a thorough examination of established legal principles while allowing for their application to contemporary issues that require renewed scholarly attention. In the context of this study, the methodology facilitates the reconstruction of Islamic criminal law perspectives on a phenomenon that did not exist during the classical period, thereby demonstrating the adaptability and relevance of Islamic jurisprudence in addressing modern ethical and legal dilemmas. By engaging in *ijtihad* grounded in classical *usul al-fiqh* principles, the study contributes to the ongoing development of Islamic legal thought in response to the challenges posed by digital technology and its impact on human dignity and the preservation of life.

Research Findings

The *takyīf fiqhī* (legal characterisation) of cyberbullying that leads to death within Islamic law is a complex issue requiring in-depth examination from a *fiqh* perspective. Cyberbullying is a modern phenomenon that did not exist during the period of revelation, and thus jurists must engage in *istinbāt* (juridical reasoning) by applying *qiyās* (analogical reasoning) to similar cases found in the scriptural sources and established principles of *fiqh*. This study identifies several key dimensions that must be analysed to determine the legal ruling of such acts, including whether the element of intent to kill exists within cyberbullying behaviour, and whether such conduct can be categorised as a form of homicide under Islamic criminal law. These two aspects serve as the foundation of the legal debate before a comprehensive ruling can be formulated.

Fiqh Interpretation of Intent to Kill

The majority of the classical schools of law namely the Ḥanafī, Shāfiʿī, and Ḥanbalī agree that criminal intent (*al-qaṣd al-jināʿī*) is an essential prerequisite for designating homicide as intentional. Since intent is an internal matter and cannot be directly observed, jurists argue that it must be inferred from external acts, particularly the type of instrument employed. For instance, if an individual uses a weapon ordinarily associated with death such as a sword, firearm, or knife the intent to kill is legally presumed from the very act of using such an instrument against the victim (al-Buhūtī, 1968; al-Ramlī et al., 1984; Ibn ʿĀbidīn, 1966). This principle also extends to actions such as strangulation or pushing a person from a high place, which are ordinarily fatal and therefore signal intent to kill. Even when the instrument used is not typically lethal, if it is employed in a manner that results in death for example, inserting a needle into a vital vein or continuously beating a person with a stick the act may still be categorised as intentional homicide.

In contrast to the view of the majority of jurists (*jumhūr al-fuqahā'*), the Mālikī school does not require that the instrument used in the killing be ordinarily lethal. It is sufficient, according to their view, that the act causing death is committed in anger without any valid shar'ī justification (*al-'udwān*). In such a case, the killing is classified as intentional homicide (*al-qatl al-'amd*), regardless of whether the instrument used is typically fatal or not ('Aleisy, 1989). Thus, according to the Mālikīs, a person is deemed an intentional killer if he either has the intent to kill, or if he acts with unjustified aggression even without an explicit intent to kill, but where his action nonetheless results in death. From this perspective, it is the broader element of criminal intent (*al-qaṣd al-jinā'i*) that is assessed, rather than a specific intent to kill.

Accordingly, a person is categorised as an intentional killer (qātil 'amd) in two situations:

- (a) He deliberately acts with aggressive intent (*al-'udwān*), whether or not he explicitly intends to kill; or
- (b) He deliberately acts with aggressive intent (*al-'udwān*) without any intent to kill, but the act nevertheless causes death.

Both situations fall under the category of intentional homicide (*al-qatl al-'amd*) in the Mālikī school. However, if it can be demonstrated that the perpetrator's intent was for the purpose of jesting or discipline, and not driven purely by aggression (*al-'udwān*), then the case may be reclassified as accidental homicide (*al-qatl al-khaṭa'*).

Based on this comparative analysis, it may be concluded that in cases of intentional homicide (*al-qatl al-'amd*), the presence of intent (*al-qaṣd al-jinā'i*) constitutes a foundational condition acknowledged across all the major schools of Islamic law. However, significant differences emerge in the approaches to defining and proving such intent. The Ḥanafī, Shāfi'ī, and Ḥanbalī schools require a clear intent to kill, usually inferred through the use of instruments ordinarily associated with death. In contrast, the Mālikī school grounds its criterion in *al-'udwān* (unjustified aggression), which indirectly implies the intention to strike unlawfully even without the intent to kill. In summary, no act is classified as intentional homicide unless there exists a conscious will to harm or kill, whether established through explicit intent, the instrument employed, or the nature of the act itself.

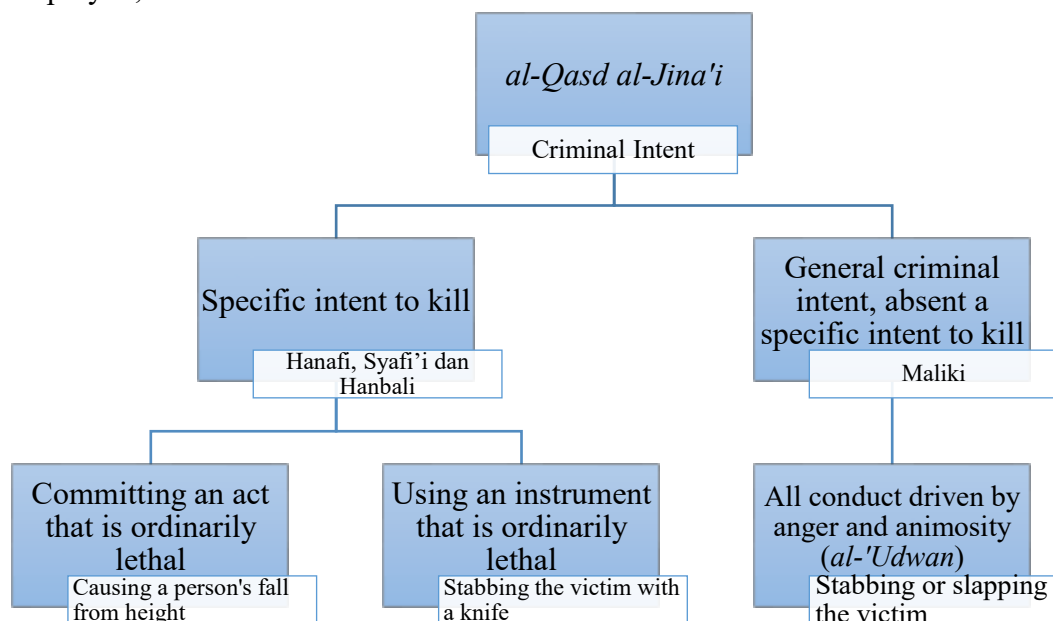


Figure 1

Cyberbullying as an Act of Homicide

In Islamic law, intentional homicide (*al-qatl al-'amd*) is established through the presence of *niyyah* (intention), namely the conscious will of a person to kill a victim. This intention is usually manifested through the use of an instrument that is ordinarily fatal, such as a sharp weapon or a heavy object, or by means of a direct act that leads to death without right. The Mālikī school distinguishes itself from the majority (*jumhūr*) by arguing that the instrument employed need not be one that normally causes death; rather, it suffices if the act itself is carried out unjustly and without right (*al-'udwān*). Based on this principle, it becomes necessary to examine whether cyberbullying fulfils the characteristics of intentional homicide in terms of *niyyah*, before concluding whether the appropriate penalty should be *qisās*, *diyah*, or *ta'zīr*.

In the context of criminal law, liability requires not only *actus reus* the commission of the criminal act itself but also *mens rea*, the mental element that establishes the perpetrator's guilt. *Mens rea* refers to the will or determination of a person to cause harm to another individual, either directly or through deliberate actions that can reasonably be foreseen to result in death. In Islamic jurisprudence, this is parallel to the concept of *al-qasḍ al-jinā'ī*, previously discussed. In cases such as cyberbullying, malicious intent is not always explicitly articulated. Rather, it may be inferred from the perpetrator's behaviour and the effects on the victim. This can be demonstrated through observable conduct, surrounding circumstances, contextual patterns, and logical inference based on the likely consequences of the acts. Within modern criminal law, particularly in cases involving cyberbullying or online threats, intent is rarely stated overtly by the perpetrator. This creates significant legal complexity, as the boundary between freedom of expression and criminal intimidation becomes blurred in the digital sphere.

Nonetheless, courts generally accept circumstantial evidence as proof of *mens rea*, such as text messages, patterns of repeated harassment, and the behaviour of the accused before and after the incident (Hallmark, 2022). For example, in *Commonwealth v. Michelle Carter*, the defendant was convicted on the basis of text messages encouraging the victim to commit suicide, despite the absence of an explicit admission of intent. This case set an important precedent, illustrating how digital messages can constitute evidence of homicidal intent and fuelling debates about the limits of legal responsibility in cyberspace (Miller, 2016; Ruedy, 2007). It also underscores that intent may be assessed from the context and consequences of conduct rather than through verbal confession alone. Such an approach is particularly critical in cyberbullying cases, where perpetrators often conceal themselves behind false identities and rarely provide open acknowledgement of their intent (Serebrennikova et al., 2021).

Similar to the principle of *mens rea* in civil legal systems, the intention to commit a crime, according to the majority of jurists from the Ḥanafī, Shāfī'ī, and Ḥanbalī schools, does not necessarily need to be expressed verbally. Rather, it may be proven through conduct and the instruments employed (al-Buhūtī, 1968; al-Ramlī et al., 1984; Ibn 'Ābidīn, 1966). In both Islamic and civil legal traditions, the burden of proving intent determines whether the maximum punishment may be imposed. Within Islamic law, if intent to kill cannot be established, the offender can only be convicted of unintentional homicide, which carries a lighter penalty such as the payment of *diyah* (blood compensation) and the performance of *kaffārah* (expiation), rather than *qisās* (retaliatory execution), in accordance with juristic consensus (*ijmā'*) (Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, 2004). This demonstrates a fundamental alignment between the two systems in making *niyyah* (intention) the decisive factor distinguishing the gravity of criminal offences.

The requirement of proving intent in both systems thus functions as a safeguard of justice, preventing wrongful conviction of individuals who lacked the intention to kill, and ensuring that only those who truly intended to cause death are subjected to the most severe penalties. This principle reflects a universal value in Islamic criminal law: that punishment must correspond proportionately to the level of intent, rather than being imposed solely based on outcomes. The next question, therefore, is whether insults and verbal abuse in cyberbullying may be considered acts of killing within the framework of fiqh.

According to the traditional framework, verbal insults, however coarse or hurtful, have not been regarded nor recorded in the classical fiqh literature as acts that ordinarily cause death. This is because they do not involve physical violence or the use of lethal instruments, such as *muḥaddad* (sharp weapons) or *muthaqqal* (heavy objects). On this basis, the present study argues that cyberbullying should not be subject to qīṣāṣ under the position of the *jumhūr*, due to the absence of *al-qaṣd al-jinā'ī* (criminal intent to kill) as they interpret it. This reasoning is reinforced by empirical observation: far more victims of verbal abuse survive than those who resort to suicide. The principle of *istiṣhāb al-'adam al-aṣlī* (presumption of non-liability) further supports this conclusion, as insults and verbal abuse have existed throughout history but have never been treated as grounds for the application of qīṣāṣ, even in cases where they may have contributed to a person's death. This is strengthened by numerous scriptural sources that categorically prohibit abusive and insulting speech without attaching to them the legal consequence of qīṣāṣ. Among these are the Quran verse in Sūrah al-Ḥujurāt as well as the following hadiths:

وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الْإِسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ ۚ وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ
الظَّالِمُونَ

Meaning: "...nor call each other by offensive nicknames. How evil it is to act rebelliously after having faith! And whoever does not repent, it is they who are the 'true' wrongdoers."

(Surah al-Hujurat (11))

لَيْسَ الْمُؤْمِنُ بِالطَّعَّانِ وَلَا اللَّعَّانِ وَلَا الْفَاحِشِ وَلَا الْبَذِيءِ

Meaning: "A true believer is not involved in taunting or frequently cursing (others) or in indecency or abusing."

(al-Tirmizi No. 1977)

In another hadith, the Prophet PBUH said:

الْمُسْلِمُ مَنْ سَلِمَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ مِنْ لِسَانِهِ وَيَدِهِ، وَالْمُهَاجِرُ مَنْ هَجَرَ مَا كَرِهَ اللَّهُ عَنَّهُ

Meaning: "A Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hands the Muslims are safe; and a Muhajir (Emigrant) is the one who refrains from what Allah has forbidden."

(al-Bukhari No. 10 and Muslim No. 40)

In modern legal systems, it may be concluded that the *jumhūr* holds intentional homicide to occur only when there is direct intent to kill through a deliberate act, or when a lethal instrument is employed, even if the intent to kill is absent. This is not far removed from the concepts of

dolus directus and dolus indirectus in German criminal law. For the *jumhūr al-fuqahā'*, the act must either be committed with a clear intention to kill, irrespective of the instrument used (dolus directus), or with an instrument such as a sword, sharp weapon, or heavy object that is commonly recognised as capable of causing death, even if the perpetrator's intention was merely to injure rather than to kill (dolus indirectus). By contrast, indirect intent that merely acknowledges the possibility of death as a consequence known as dolus eventualis is insufficient to establish intentional homicide in their view, because it does not satisfy the requirement of a physical act that ordinarily causes death. Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between *al-qasḍ al-jinā'ī*, dolus directus, and dolus indirectus as understood by the *jumhūr*.

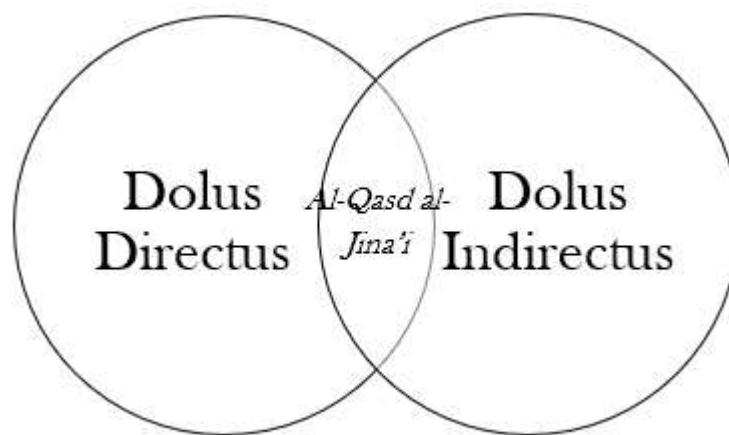


Figure 2

The Mālikī school adopts a broader and more stringent approach in defining intentional homicide (*al-qatl al-ʿamd*). Unlike the *jumhūr*, who stipulate that an act of killing must be carried out with an instrument ordinarily capable of causing death (*ghāliban yuqṭal bihi*), the Mālikīs require only the presence of *al-ʿudwān* that is, hostility, malicious intent, or enmity regardless of the type of instrument used (al-Dardīr, 2001). This means that, from the Mālikī perspective, if a person engages in an aggressive act against another with the intention of causing harm, and the act subsequently results in death, it is still classified as intentional homicide, even if the instrument employed was not ordinarily lethal, such as a small stone, a cane, or even a slap with the hand.

Accordingly, in addition to recognising dolus directus and dolus indirectus as grounds for categorising homicide as intentional, the Mālikī school also acknowledges cases involving dolus eventualis as intentional homicide. In dolus eventualis, the perpetrator is aware that their actions may lead to serious consequences such as death, but proceeds nonetheless (Horwitz, 2022). The Mālikīs take a parallel stance: once *al-ʿudwān* (malicious intent) is established, the offender bears full criminal responsibility even if the instrument used is not ordinarily fatal. For example, if a person pushes another out of anger or enmity, and the victim dies as a result of the fall, the Mālikīs may classify this as *al-qatl al-ʿamd* because *al-ʿudwān* is present, even though no weapon was used.

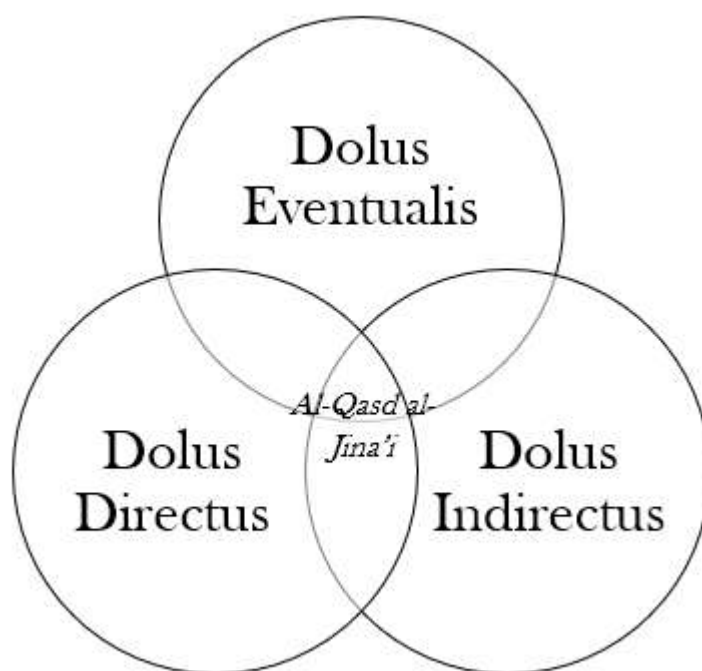


Figure 3

If a cyberbully deliberately humiliates, defames, or persistently exposes the victim to public shame to the extent that it results in suicide, and if malicious intent (*al-‘udwān*) can be established, the act may be classified as intentional homicide (*al-qatl al-‘amd*) under the Mālikī school, thereby justifying the application of qīṣāṣ. Conversely, where hostility cannot be proven with sufficient certainty, or where there is no clear awareness of the serious consequences of the act, the offender should instead be regarded as having committed unintentional homicide (*al-qatl al-khaṭa’*). In such circumstances, the liability would be limited to diyah (blood compensation) or ta‘zīr (discretionary punishment), rather than qīṣāṣ.

Preferred Opinion

Based on an in-depth analysis of the principles of Islamic criminal law, this study supports the majority view (jumhūr al-fuqahā’) that perpetrators of cyberbullying should not be subjected to qīṣāṣ (retaliatory punishment). Instead, more appropriate penalties would be diyah (blood compensation) or ta‘zīr (discretionary punishment), depending on whether the authorities can successfully identify the actual perpetrator. In addition to previously discussed arguments such as the absence of *al-qaṣd al-jinā’ī* (criminal intent) directly linked to killing, and the principle of *istiṣhāb al-‘adam al-aṣlī* (presumption of non-liability) Islamic law also upholds an undeniable principle: ḥudūd punishments cannot be carried out in the presence of doubt (*syubhah*) (Ibn al-Qaṭṭān, 2004). While jurists differ as to whether qīṣāṣ should also be suspended in the presence of *syubhah*, many scholars including Ibn al-Qaṣṣār (2022) in *‘Uyūn al-Adillah*, Zakariyyā al-Anṣārī (nd) in *Asnā al-Maṭālib*, al-Kāsānī (1989) in *Badā’i ‘al-Ṣanā’i*, and Ibn Qudāmah in al-Mughnī (1969) argue that qīṣāṣ too cannot be implemented when doubt exists.

In cases of cyberbullying, multiple *shubuhāt* (doubts) arise that prevent the confident and just application of *qīṣāṣ*, particularly if the accused denies guilt. Among the most critical uncertainties are:

1. Did the victim's death truly result from cyberbullying, or were there other contributing factors, such as pre-existing mental health conditions?
2. Was the perpetrator aware that their actions could lead to death, or did it occur without conscious intent?
3. If several individuals participated in the bullying, who is the actual perpetrator? There is often no clear evidence linking a specific actor as the decisive cause, and the victim may not have even read some comments.

Beyond these issues, law enforcement faces structural challenges in identifying cyber perpetrators, which themselves constitute *syubhah*. Daud (2025) highlights that in today's digital era, cybercriminals often conceal their identities through the use of proxy servers and virtual private networks (VPNs), making it extremely difficult for investigators to track them. Similarly, Singh et al. (2021) note the prevalence of identity theft, where offenders use another individual's account or identity in online activity. Such risks further complicate attribution in cyberbullying cases, casting serious doubt on who is truly behind the abusive messages.

Cyberbullying-induced death cannot be conclusively classified as *al-al-qatl bi-sabab* (indirect homicide). This is because the elements of cyberbullying such as repeated insults, psychological threats, exposure of private matters, and social pressure are remote and ambiguous causes, unlike the direct and isolatable causes recognised in *fiqh*. Al-Ramlī (1984) in *Nihāyat al-Muhtāj* divided causation (*sabab*) into three categories: *ḥissī* (sensory), such as compelling someone to commit murder; *urfi* (customary), such as serving poisoned food to a guest; and *sharʿī* (legal), such as giving false testimony that leads to another person's execution. What unites these categories is their clarity and directness they represent causes that can be specifically identified as the decisive factor leading to death. Cyberbullying, by contrast, often exerts psychological pressure but rarely operates as the sole or direct cause of suicide. Many victims may already be struggling with emotional distress or personal difficulties before becoming targets of online abuse. For this reason, cyberbullying is better understood as a triggering factor rather than an independent *sabab* sufficient to justify *qīṣāṣ*.

Accordingly, for cyberbullying to be categorised as *al-qatl bi-sabab* committed intentionally, it would require careful examination of the perpetrator's degree of involvement, the consistency of abusive behaviour, and the level of awareness regarding the potential impact of their actions on the victim. Unless all other external factors can be conclusively eliminated, the presence of *syubhah* (doubt) remains, and the implementation of *qīṣāṣ* is not permissible.

Cyberbullying leading to death must not be trivialised in the framework of Islamic criminal law, nor can its proof requirements be disregarded. Although it does not involve a physical weapon, it remains a form of unjust aggression capable of causing real death. However, as much as justice demands that perpetrators be punished and victims compensated, Islamic law equally requires protection against wrongful conviction. If it is definitively proven that the cyberbully acted consciously, repeatedly, and with intent to destroy the victim and the victim explicitly linked their death to the bully's actions then the case could be categorised as intentional homicide. Under the Mālikī school, this opens the possibility of *qīṣāṣ*, particularly if such crimes become widespread. Nevertheless, outside of such clear circumstances, this study suggests that the maximum penalty for cyberbullying causing death should be *diyyah*

mughallaḥ (aggravated blood-money) based on semi-intentional killing, together with *kaffārah* (expiation). Where even semi-intentional elements are not fulfilled, *ta'zīr* remains the appropriate option, consistent with the majority view.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that cyberbullying is a complex and increasingly critical form of digital crime, capable of leading to tragic outcomes such as the victim's suicide. From the perspective of Islamic law, while such conduct is unequivocally prohibited (*ḥarām*) and subject to punishment, the application of *qīṣās* penalties encounters significant epistemological and procedural challenges. The findings suggest that cyberbullying constitutes a prohibited act in Islam and may warrant sanctions such as *diyah* (blood money) together with *kaffārah*, analogous to quasi-intentional killing, or be punishable under *ta'zīr* (discretionary penalties). Nevertheless, enforcement authorities face considerable difficulty in establishing the causal link between acts of bullying and subsequent suicide, particularly when multiple perpetrators and anonymous accounts are involved. The enforcement of the Penal Code (Amendment) 2025 and the Criminal Procedure Code (Amendment) 2025 is expected to provide a more holistic framework for addressing cyberbullying, including strengthening mechanisms for detecting intent, protecting victims, and prosecuting offenders. At the same time, an integrated approach is required bringing together educational institutions, families, law enforcement agencies, and digital platform providers to safeguard emotional wellbeing and the sanctity of life. This is especially critical for adolescents, who are among the most vulnerable to cyberbullying. Preventing cyberbullying must therefore be seen not only as a technological imperative but also as a moral and humanitarian responsibility.

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