THE IMPACT OF ‘SELFIE’ PHENOMENON AMONG THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION

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Abstract: The phenomenon of selfie among the millennial generation has become a very common thing to do. In the study of contemporary Islamic law, the approach of maqāshid syar‘ah that seeks to gain mashlahāt (benefits) and avoids mafsādāt (harms) in human life may be used as a special consideration for dealing with the said phenomenon. This literature-based study was aimed to uncover the said phenomenon by reviewing it using mashlahāt and mafsādāt approaches. The results of the study indicate that the said approaches have urgency as a means of control against the selfie phenomenon practiced by the current millennial generation. Selfie should only be done if it brings benefits and goodness (mashlahāt), otherwise, it must be avoided.

Abstrak: Fenomena selfie pada generasi millennial sudah menjadi hal yang sangat sering dilakukan. Dalam kajian hukum Islam kontemporer, pendekatan maqāshid syar‘ah yang berupaya mewujudkan mashlahāt dan menghindarkan mafsādāt dalam kehidupan manusia bisa dijadikan pertimbangan khusus menghadapi fenomena selfie tersebut. Kajian berbasis studi pustaka ini berupaya mengungkap fenomena tersebut ditinjau dengan menggunakan pendekatan mashlahāt dan mafsādāt. Hasil studi menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan mashlahāt dan mafsādāt memiliki urgensi sebagai alat kontrol terhadap fenomena selfie yang dilakukan oleh generasi millennial saat ini. Selfie hanya boleh dilakukan jika mendaetangkan manfaat dan kebaikan (mashlahāt), sebaliknya jika tidak, maka selfie harus dihindari.

Keywords: selfie, millennial generation, Islamic law, mashlahāt, mafsādāt
Introduction

This study departs from the authors’ interest about the fundamental values of Islamic law (maqāṣid syari’ah) and the authors’ curiosity on the selfie phenomenon practiced by the today’s millennial generation. The study of the concept of mashlahāt has claimed a very strategic and important place as an effort in responding to and answering the issues faced by the people in this contemporary era. Such is true when the concept is juxtaposed with the said selfie phenomenon.

The progress in the technological era, especially the advancement in the communication technology, has been easing human in conducting their activities that could not otherwise be done in the past. News and information from all over the world are very easily obtained with no time delay and people may access them just by opening the gadget.¹ In this modern era, people have benefited greatly from various advances in the information technology even to the point that they no longer need to shop to modern stores or conventional markets since they can do it through their smartphones.

Thanks to the advancement of smartphone technology, the use of social media has also been progressing very rapidly. The vast use of telecommunication media has brought a very significant impact on communication behaviour today.² One of them is narcissism. This narcissistic behaviour is generally known as selfie which is defined by some experts as taking one’s own picture either alone, with a partner, or a group of people using a cell phone camera - by holding it with his/her hands or with assistive devices or directing it to a mirror - and then sharing it via social media.³ Another definition of selfie is ‘a self-portrait digital photograph, typically taken with a digital camera or smartphone, which may be held in the hand or supported by a selfie stick’.⁴ Selfies are often shared on social media via social networking services such as Facebook (FB), Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram (IG). The word selfie was added to the Oxford English Dictionary in 2013.⁵ In the dictionary, the word selfie is a noun which is defined as ‘a photo of yourself that you take, typically with a smartphone or webcam, and usually put on social media’.⁶

Etymologically, the first-known appearance of selfie in written form occurred in

2002 on an Australian news website, but the word did not see much use of it until 2012. By November 2013, *selfie* appeared frequently enough in print and electronic media that *Oxford Dictionaries* (publisher of the Oxford English Dictionary as well as other dictionaries) chose the word as its Word of the Year. This announcement itself led to a significant increase in the use of the word by news organizations, an increase that was further boosted following the December 2013 memorial service for Nelson Mandela, at which the then American President Barack Obama was caught taking a *selfie* with the Danish Prime Minister Helle Thorning-Schmidt and the British Prime Minister David Cameron. The word *selfie*, with its suggestions of self-centeredness and self-involvement, was particularly popular with critics who saw this moment as a reflection of the President’s character.\(^7\)

*Selfie* has been popular and is done by nearly all groups of people: youngsters, students, teachers, bureaucrats, politicians, businessmen, domestic workers, and so forth. It knows no boundary. Even it may be categorized as an overdose activity.\(^8\) The passion for doing *selfie* that has become a phenomenon in today’s generation has sometimes gotten out of hand. *Selfie* fans seem to be carried away in all situations and conditions, so they don’t realize that the *selfie* results they post may contain elements of showing off, hurting, and offending other people’s feelings. Taking *selfies* without publishing in a post on social media certainly doesn’t lead to any problem. However, if the *selfie* is posted on social media, there is likely to be a hidden intention from doing so whether to get a response from the *netizens*, such as *likes* and *comments*, or praises from others.\(^9\)

In Indonesia, several studies on the *selfie* phenomenon have actually been conducted. Some of them include Raditya who studied *selfie* and social media as an existence proof in arts,\(^10\) Krisnawati and Soetjiningsih who studied the relation between *selfie* and lonelines on students,\(^11\) and Ikhsan and Pranata who studied the motives of *selfie* among students.\(^12\) Differing to these studies, the authors focused this study in responding to the issue of social media use that changes the inevitable people’s behaviour and is demanded to go along with the development of era. Meanwhile, the paradigm of Islamic law which is *shāliḥ fi kulli samān wa makān* (good in all time and place) is required to provide a response to the issue in concern. Islamic law does not close itself off and rejects various advances of

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\(^7\) “*Selfie,*” in https://www.merriam-webster.com.


the times, even it basically provides leeway to be able to be more open and accept every product of the progress of the times.\textsuperscript{13}

This study employed an approach of contemporary Islamic law which is known as 
maqâshid syari’ah (purposefulness of Islamic law) with its basic principles: obtaining mashlahât and rejecting mafsadât. In the context of the attitude towards the selfie phenomenon as previously described, Muslims are required to be more selective and wise in responding to this. This means that any activity can be justified in Islamic law to be permissibly done when it brings mashlahât, otherwise, if it leads to mafsadât, such activity must be avoided.

This paper will reveal the selfie phenomenon among the millennial generation analysed using mashlahât and mafsadât theories as the essence of maqâshid syari’ah paradigm. The data were obtained through a literature study (library research) on several media about the selfie phenomenon. Then, they were dialogued against the essence of maqâshid syari’ah. Meanwhile, the data were analysed using the content analysis,\textsuperscript{14} so that it was expected to produce a view on the selfie phenomenon through the perspective of mashlahât and mafsadât.

\textbf{Selfie: Between a Need and Narcissism}

In this competition era, a man does not only compete with other people but also with robots and machines that have a much higher level of efficiency. This is certainly a challenge in itself as well as an inevitable reality. Evolution in the field of technology and internet innovation does not only give birth to new media, but also changes various patterns of human life such as their social interaction and communication. In the past, people introduced each other in a conventional way such as exchanging business cards; today, the way is very different: they no longer exchange business cards but, rather, they exchange account addresses or make friends through social media.\textsuperscript{15}

One of the consequences of technological developments is the appearance of social media which then becomes a human special need. Social media is part of online media which aims to ease its users to share and participate. Additionally, social media is an online media that supports aspects of social communication and the use of social media employing media web-based such as Instagram (IG), Facebook (FB), Twitter, Whatsapp (WA), and so on has changed communication in the interactive form. With the existence of social

\textsuperscript{13} Nur Aksin, “Pandangan Islam Terhadap Pemanfaatan Media Sosial,” in Jurnal Informatika, Vol. 2, No. 2, 2016, p. 120.

\textsuperscript{14} See further, John W. Creswell, Qualitative Inquiray and Research Design (Los Angelos: SAGE, 2013) and C. R. Kothari, Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques (New Delhi: New Age International Ltd. Publisher, 2004).

media, many human activities are facilitated, such as making it easier to find information, to make friends with distant people, to buy and sell, to study, and so forth.\textsuperscript{16}

The use of social media nowadays has had a tremendous influence on social changes in society. Social media has also presented the idea of a “\textit{global village}” where people are now connected by internet telecommunication technology through social media. The impact is that humans have entered the modern revolution where the boundaries of place and time have been able to be penetrated with no limitation.\textsuperscript{17}

Unfortunately, in reality, there is a very worrying trend among today’s modern society. People today have a great dependence on the use of technology. Activities without technology seem tasteless so much so that when someone leaves home without his/her smartphone, he/she is willing to return back to pick it up since it is considered important to him/her, even some people regard it as ‘everything’. The customs and culture of the modern era today attract people to use technology even to the level of “\textit{overdose}”. This fact seems to be easily agreed noting that the use of this technology does not limit any age and caste so that anyone can consume it although, eventually, such situation makes it difficult for them to distinguish between the virtual world and the real one.

Community and social networking are a platform to express oneself. With the aid of social media, anyone having an account can upload his/her photos to share with friends or public easily. With various conveniences presented, social media users can upload all their activities at any time and from any place to show their ‘at-present’ condition and important moments to all their friends. There are two possible feelings when they stare at their bodies and faces in a \textit{selfie}, either they secretly admire and are proud of what they see or become trapped in reluctance and horror when noticing a flaw and a defect in them.\textsuperscript{18}

The \textit{selfie} behaviour is a narcissism that explores one’s body and capture important and happy moments in one’s life. When someone expresses himself/herself on a moment through a \textit{selfie}, he/she will feel superior to others and feel more confident. \textit{Selfie} is also a part of mirroring oneself in a mirror that does not only reflect the image but also that attempts to find the one’s own subject in an imaginary world.\textsuperscript{19} Therefore, \textit{selfie} photos were captured, selected, and sometimes edited first before they were uploaded to one’s social media account. The aim is to have uploaded photos look more captivating. Apart from showing off attracting bodies, the \textit{selfie} takers usually look for perfect locations as

\begin{itemize}
  \item Mulawarman and Nurfitri, “Perilaku Pengguna Media Sosial”, p. 37.
  \item \textit{Ibid}, p. 106.
\end{itemize}
their photo backgrounds coupled with expressions of happiness to show how happy their lives are. It seems that such existence is only behind a mirror that covers an actual image.  

Narcissism behaviour is no longer a part of human nature but it has a purpose to favour freedom and attitudes that simlutaneously instil efficient and economical standards and that can compete with others. It is used as capital to be able to bring an advantage in a social context and be able to respond to various social phenomena and may even become an instrumental force on societal norms and ethical conducts of consumption and production communities.

**Maqâshid Syarî‘ah: an Effort to Realize Mashlahât and Reject Mafsadât**

In one paper, Nur and Muttaqin wrote that different era brings with it different issues, especially with today's situation in which scientific and technological advancement moves very rapidly. It is, therefore, understandable that the classical model of Islamic law cannot be presented to deal with current problems satisfactorily. Facing such situation, contemporary Moslem scholars use their reason with the help of *nash syar‘iy* (Islamic legal texts) to determine whether a thing is *mashlahât* or *mafsadât*. This is so since determining *mashlahât* and *mafsadât* using the power of one's reason only without the assistance of *nash syar‘iy* will cause anyone to fall into mere human egoism and lust.

Etymologically, *mashlahât* means goodness, it is the goodness that exists within human beings and that prevents them from damage. Luwis Ma'luf defines that *mashlahât* is something that brings benefits to individuals and groups, whereas in the dictionary of Lisân al-Arâb, *mashlahât* is defined as manifesting goodness and eliminating damage. Meanwhile, in Mukhtâr al-Sihâh, *mashlahât* is explained to be the opposite of damage. Apart from that, it is also stated in *Mu'jam al-Mushthalâhât al-Alfâz al-Fiqhiyyah* that *mashlahât* is goodness (*al-khayr*) which is the opponent of damage. From some of these definitions, it can be understood that *mashlahât* linguistically means something

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20 Rabian Syahbana, *Selfie (Mengungkap Fenomena Selfie dari Masa ke Masa)* (Surabaya: Workshop Nulis Buku, 2014), p. 34.


that brings people into goodness and expediency, whereas terminologically, there are several differences among the scholars about mashlahāt.\textsuperscript{27}

Al-Syāṭībi defined that mashlahāt is all efforts to achieve a position of benefit and goodness and a rejection of damage (mafsādat) obtained through reason assisted by nash syarī‘y.\textsuperscript{28} Ibn ‘Asyūr explained that mashlahāt is an action that produces continuous benefits and goodness for individuals and groups.\textsuperscript{29} Meanwhile, al-Būti explained that mashlahāt as goodness and benefits given by Allah to human beings to protect religion, soul, mind, descent, and property (al-ushūl al-khamsah).\textsuperscript{30}

Al-Ghazālī explained that mashlahāt is a term that represents the purpose of God. He said that mashlahāt is a statement towards the realization of benefits and rejection of damage.\textsuperscript{31} These two things - realization of benefits and rejection of damage, - in his view, cannot be realized only based on human will, but, rather, with the guidance and the will of nash that include realizing the goodness of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth. To al-Ghazālī, all the matters and conducts that safeguard these five things are mashlahāt, otherwise they are mafsādat.\textsuperscript{32}

From some of these definitions given by Moslem scholars, it can be concluded that they agreed that the arrival of syari‘ah (religious rules) aims for realizing benefits and avoiding harms. Nevertheless, they consciously admitted that mashlahāt and mafsādat which are truly pure (maḥdhāḥ) are only a few in number. Such was stated by ʿAbd al-Salam who said that everything that happens in this world which has a pure value of either mashlahāt or mafsādat is very little, whereas those containing both values of mashlahāt and mafsādat are many.\textsuperscript{33}

What was meant by mashlahāt in the above explanation is benefit which becomes the purpose and goal of syara‘ and not one which is solely based on human desire and lust. This is so because it is understandable that the purpose of implementing Islamic law sent by Allah is none other than to realize mashlahāt for all human beings in all aspects of their life in the world as well as to avoid them from various things that can lead to damage. In other words, every provision of Islamic law that has been established by Syāri‘ (the Law Maker, namely Allah), is aimed at creating benefits for all mankind.


\textsuperscript{28} Abū Ishāq al-Syāṭībi, Al-I‘tishām, Chap. II (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥādīts, 2008), p. 362.

\textsuperscript{29} Muḥammad Tāhir Ibn ʿAsyūr, Maqāshid Syarī‘ah al-İslāmiyyah (Jordan: Dār al-Nافī‘, 2009), p. 278.

\textsuperscript{30} Muḥammad Sa‘īd Ramadān al-Būṭi, Dhawābit al-Maṣَاḥah fi al-Syari‘ah al-Islāmiyyah (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risālah, 2005), p. 27.


\textsuperscript{32} Ibid, p. 275

Mashlahât as a method of determining Islamic law requires and positions the values of goodness in the diversity of madshab (Islamic school of thought) with all their differences in the method of istinbâth (way of establishing law) and all its legal products. When there is a difference concerning the law about an issue, the final decision as a ‘referee’ is a compromise or comparison that favors an opinion that is more inclined towards realizing the general benefit for mankind, therefore, the tarjih (opting the stronger argument) method is more dominant in the use of mashlahât as an approach or as a method for establishing Islamic law (al-istinbâth al-hukmi).  

The above explanation can be traced through the mixture between the value of kindness with evil, joy with misery, and pleasure with pain. Such is in line with al-Qarafi who said that mashlahât would not appear unless there present mafsadât albeit only in a small proportion and the vice versa, mafsadât would not appear unless there present mashlahât albeit only in a small proportion. Therefore, when determining mashlahât, one should consider which one of the two is more dominant. When mafsadât dominates, a matter falls into the mafsadât category and must be avoided. However, if mashlahât dominates, it falls into the mashlahât category and must be taken.

Al-Syâtibi also strengthened the opinion of the mentioned scholars. According to him, if there are more mashlahât found in a matter, then this would be the real goal of syara', but if mafsadât dominates in it, then the matter must be abandoned. Both mashlahât and mafsadât do not completely negate each other’s existence in certain conditions and cases. Thus, rejecting mafsadât alone does not necessarily manifest mashlahât absolutely. The concept of realizing mashlahât and rejecting mafsadât has a relationship in the same condition, even though the two have different concepts.

As a result, all legal stipulations by fuqahâ’ (Moslem jurists) require to be decided whether their stipulations contain mashlahât or mafsadât. In determining such legal stipulations, they do not only employ their reason, but must be assisted with nash syara’ to avoid the possibility of being trapped in assessing the matter merely based on lust. This was used by al-Ghazâlî when interpreting mashlahât by defining it as rejecting harms and realizing

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35 Al-Salâm, Qawâ’d al-Ahkâm, p. 5.
goodness and benefits in order to achieve the goal and will of God which include protecting one’s religion, soul, intellect, offspring, wealth, environment, dignity, and nation’s unity which are summed up as maqâshid syarî’ah.\textsuperscript{40}

In accordance with the understanding of the maqâshid concept as previously explained, it can be understood that legal stipulation using mashlahât and mafsâdât (maqâshid syarî’ah) is a right that is isbâtît (permanent) for every individual or group which is regulated by provisions of Islamic law. It can also be understood that maqâshid is al-huqq al-khâshshah (special rights). Meanwhile, the right to stipulate law using mashlahât and mafsâdât (maqâshid syarî’ah) is divided into three, namely the rights of Allah, human rights, and the rights of both. Allah's rights are those related to general benefits and benefits for all human beings without exception. This means that this right is a benefit that must be realized by humans in terms of upholding the religion of Allah.

Human rights are something that Allah stipulates for the benefit of individuals and groups during their life in this world. These human rights are special rights attached to all mankind to obtain a right of goodness and benefit in all matters. Meanwhile, the rights of Allah and humans are those that are exclusive to Allah and human rights. The concept of rights which disambiguate into maqâshid syarî’ah is a fundamental value in realizing mashlahât in all aspects of human life.\textsuperscript{41}

Thus, the emergence of the mashlahât theory aims to fight transnationality and introduce the diversity of Islamic law products that are under one big umbrella, namely mashlahât (benefits). The emergence of the theme (i.e. mashlahât) itself, as explained by Nur and Muttaquin, has the Holy Qur’an together with the Hadith of the Prophet as its foothold.\textsuperscript{42} Therefore it can be said that the emergence of mashlahât has a very big role in creating an order of life that is godly, just, has legal certainty, and has a universal understanding of benefit. With such conditions, Islam will come forward to today’s human civilization with a cool, peaceful, and reassuring face.

**Dampening the Selfie Phenomenon Practiced by the Millennial Generation through the Mashlahât and Mafsâdât Approaches**

The rapid development of technology and science in the use of social media has contributed to the speed of continuous changing of the concept of social media. This is evidenced by the emergence of new websites and various social media contents all the time. During its development, social media has become increasingly popular in all human

\textsuperscript{40} Al-Ghazâlî, *Al-Mustasyfâ*, p. 275.


\textsuperscript{42} Nur and Muttaquin, “Reformulating the Concept of Mashlahah”, p. 74.
activities. We know that most people in the world have social connections through social media accounts such as Facebook, Twitter, and Whatsapp, to name the most used social media by all categories of race, age, social class, and gender.\footnote{Christopher Barger, *The Social Media Strategies: Built a Successful Program the Inside Out* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2012), p. 28.}

Social media has also become a very popular topic among academics in the fields of communication, sociology, psychology, business, and economics. This can be found in various works and literature that review it. Various works and literature that have been published in the last few decades are more focused on discussing the social processes of the impact of social media in the realms of economy, marketing, politics, communication, education, and health.\footnote{Evawani Elysa Lubis, “Potret Media Sosial dan Perempuan,” in *Jurnal PARALLELA*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2014, p. 101.}

Historically, narcissistic photographs (*selfies*) became popular in 2013 to coincide with the emergence of new *gadget* technology with various facilities for taking *selfies*. The emergence of the term *selfie* started when there were phenomena of taking one’s photograph by using the most common style and were done by most people and were regarded common. *Selfie* photographs can be done by using a camera that is directed at the photographer or taking one’s photo using a tool and by reflecting on the mirror. However, the range of such *selfie* is limited, so the most obvious and most visible objects are the *photographer* himself/herself and some people around him/her.\footnote{Umi Hanik, “Relasi Makna *Selfie*”, pp. 62-63.}

One of the motives to post and upload *selfies* on social media is to express one happiness. Happiness may be defined as a state of being very well and having pleasant experiences. Those who upload *selfie* photos convey happiness and express it by narcissistic post which are usually accompanied by an interesting *caption* in order to attract readers and get ‘likes’ and comment.\footnote{Kathryn Pounders, Christine M. Kowalczyk, and Kirsten Stowers, “Insight into the Motivation of Selfie Postings: Impression Management and Self-Esteem,” in *European Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 50, No. 9/10, 2016, p. 11.} This shows that displaying self-confidence and happiness with *selfies* is the main motivation for posting photos on their social media accounts. More specifically, those who upload *selfie* photos want to tell others that they are happy individuals and they post their *selfies* via social media to convey this message.\footnote{*Ibid.*, p. 13.}

Along with the development of technology and the internet, posting *selfie* photos via social media has indeed become popular and has serves as a self-presentation. One study found that the motivation for people to take and post *selfie* photos is to reveal impression management. The impression meant here is to convey a positive self-image
to public by showing to them photos of being happy which also display a perfect and beautiful physical appearance.\textsuperscript{48}

However, not all selfie photos were posted in the context of happiness, some were meant to cover up one’s sadness and downturn. The hope is that when the photos get likes and good comments from the public, he/she will forget his/her sadness although just a little.\textsuperscript{49} From these various motivations of posting selfie photos, it seems they were done to satisfy human desire for obtaining instant satisfaction. By posting them, they get an opportunity to feel good about themselves, although sometimes the bad feeling about oneself may also occur.

Apart from the motivational aspect of taking selfies, it is very often that selfie takers do not think wisely about the dangers of the scene they take. A cliff edge, the roof of a multi-storey building, or the transmitter tower become favourite background offering a unique beauty for selfie takers regardless they expose fatal threats to their lives.\textsuperscript{50} A report from the Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care cited by Christiatutti on her post stated that at least 259 people died while clicking selfies around the world between October 2011 and November 2017. The highest number of incidents and selfie-deaths has been reported in India followed by Russia, United States, and Pakistan.\textsuperscript{51}

Relating to cases of selfies that result in fatalities, every year the number of victims increases. This was triggered by increasingly sophisticated cell phones and selfie supporting accessories in the forms of a tripod or a handphone holder stick which make selfie activities easier. Introduction of “selfie sticks” and “selfie shoe” have enhanced obsession among people for selfies.\textsuperscript{52} These days the choice of smart phones is based on their selfie picture quality. They allegedly encourage selfie takers to challenge a bigger risk in order to get satisfying and perfect selfie photos. Thus, taking selfie photos seems to be a must and should be carried out without considering about its negative impacts.

Furthermore, the selfie phenomenon done by the millennial generation also stimulates extravagant behaviour in the form of buying expensive cameras and their accessories either for occasional use or just for the sake of prestige, despite the fact that an expensive camera is not a basic requirement for taking selfies. Taking selfies has also been considered

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., p. 15.
\textsuperscript{52} J Che, “Selfie Shoes are exactly what they sound like,” in https://huffingtonpost.com (1 April 2015).
to be selfish and obsessed with one’s own appearance. Even so, several studies revealed that apart from having negative impacts, selfie also provides mental health benefits. It has an impact on one’s self-confidence. It also makes people happy and helps to ease burdens in their mind.⁵³

The presented data elaboration indicate that selfie has both positive impacts (mashlahât) and negative one (mafsadât). In accordance with our understanding, God’s laws revealed to mankind aim to create benefits on this earth. The problems and issues faced by mankind in this world always grow, develop, and never end⁵⁴ whereas detailed and lucid texts of God’s laws are very limited. In such a condition, Islamic teaching provides a way for mankind to stipulate laws which can help us find a way out for the problems we face.⁵⁵

Maqâshid syarî‘ah (purposefulness of God’s laws) has the essence of realizing mashlahât and avoiding mafsadât. Etymologically, mashlahât has a meaning that is identical to benefit, advantage, joy, pleasure, and all efforts that can lead to goodness. Whereas in the terminology of syarî‘ah, mashlahât substantially is a state of an effort that aims to manifest in a positive condition and avoid a negative one.⁵⁶ Applying the perspective and approach of mashlahât and mafsadât, in the authors’ view, is essential in responding to the conditions and habits practiced by the current millennial generation. The alarming need for proper ethics in using social media, the showing off one’s vanity and arrogance, offending those who are less fortunate, and other negative impacts resulted from selfie habits need a to receive appropriate attention and analysis.

Seeking for mashlahât and avoiding mafsadât are a new characteristic model in contemporary Islamic law. This characteristic will create a more dynamic and flexible Islamic law which is less rigid in understanding the text. Having so, the paradigm of contemporary Islamic law which prioritizes the creation of mashlahât will be more adaptable and oriented towards the social and humanity life.⁵⁷ The mashlahât approach to contemporary problems and phenomena will give rise to Islamic legal thought that cannot be separated

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from the context surrounding it including the time context, spatial context, historical context, social context, cultural context, psychological context, and religious context.\textsuperscript{58}

The real purpose of Islamic law is to realize and create benefits and reject harms in the human life, and there is no doubt that benefit continues to develop with the development of social reality and will continue to evolve with the changes of environmental situation and condition. If the benefit is neither prioritized in its entirety nor responded to with an appropriate provision but rather is only focused on the existence of arguments that acknowledges it, surely it will disappear from the human life’s reality and the development of law that is responsive to the changes and developments of era will cease. It has to be noted that any attitude which does not pay attention to the development of mashlahât means that it is neither in line with nor in agreement with the goals of Islamic law which is to realize and create benefits and reject harms to the continuity of human life. Therefore, holding on to mashlahât becomes a must since it is one of the main grips that stand as a separate theory and does not come out of other legal bases. Thus, it becomes clear and obvious that the perspective in the concept of mashlahât is part of the objectives of syari’ah even though it is not directly stated by nash (texts) of the Holy Qur’an and Hadith.

The interesting part to observe from the concepts of mashlahât and mafsadât is the substance of the benefits (mashlahât) and harms (madharât/mafsadât) itself. In this case, the measure of a value for mashlahât must exist within mankind. Then, the value of a human action must be measured by absolute perfection which is the value of every human action. Meanwhile, the value that is sought to achieve the degree of mashlahât must be obtained through correct knowledge (al-ma’rifah al-shahihah) and carried out with moderation (al-i’tidâl), which is done by respecting the rights of others. The concept of realizing mashlahât and eliminating mafsadât is actually to realize real human welfare as well as to achieve sustainable development in the long term. The realization of mashlahât for human beings is a basic requirement relating to human rights.\textsuperscript{59}

The new format of ijtihâd (intellectual exercise) using the mashlahât approach is an idea of uniting and viewing a problem from various scientific disciplinary perspectives.\textsuperscript{60} Therefore, in responding to the said selfie phenomenon, it is necessary to consider the mashlahât aspect from many points of view. Meanwhile, the main essence in conducting ijtihâd using the mashlahât approach is avoiding mafsadât. In this situation, Islamic law


\textsuperscript{60} Nur and Muttaqin, “Reformulating the Concept of Mashlahah”, p. 75.
is present by providing an understanding and solution in responding to the rampant selfie activities.

The urgency of the emergence of the concept of mashlahât which is reduced in maqāshid syarì’ah originated from the anxiety of Islamic jurists about the sustainability of Islamic law products. This anxiety is certainly not without reason; the difference in time and changes in place is certainly the main trigger. Therefore, in its development, the concept of mashlahât experienced a conceptual renewal through a new breakthrough from a philosophical approach to a systems approach. With this understanding, mashlahât certainly has a very strong urgency in maintaining the spirit of Islamic law to be accepted at any place and time.\footnote{Abdurrohman Kasdi, “Actualizations of Maqasid al-Shariah in Modern Life: Maqasid al-Shariah Theory as a Method of the Development of Islamic Laws and Shariah Economics,” in Justicia Islamica: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Dan Sosial, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2019, p. 257.}

Furthermore, the use of mashlahât also has significant legal implications to the contemporary Islamic law’s style and format. The strength of attaining mashlahât in exploring contemporary Islamic law opens up very widely the possibility of the birth of different Islamic legal provisions at different places and in developing time. This is because employing mashlahât as a consideration in stipulating a law is very much influenced by the conditions of the place and the time difference. Islamic law that once developed in the Middle East, for example, cannot automatically be applied in other places such as Indonesia. One of the aspects that influence it is the condition of the place (the reality of society) and the human civilization at different time. Therefore, Islamic law is open, flexible, and distinct; it is not like the characteristic of tawhìd (faith) which is certain.

In this case, Yûsuf al-Qarâdhåwi, one of the scholars who developed the concept of maqâshid syarì’ah, had outlined the rules to be considered should there be a contradiction between mashlahât and mafsadât. The rules include the following: 1) rejecting mafsadât must take precedence over attaining mashlahât, 2) a little mafsadât will be pardoned in order to gain a greater mashlahât, 3) a temporary mafsadât is forgiven for attaining a continuous mashlahât, and 4) attaining mashlahât that is certain should not be left for avoiding mafsadât that is still suspected.\footnote{Yûsuf al-Qarâdhåwi, Fi Fiqh al-Aulawiyyàt: Dirasât al-Jadìdah fi Dau’ al-Qur’an wa al-Sunnah (Cairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 2011), p. 28.}

Understanding the mashlahât (positive) and mafsadât (negative) sides of today’s selfie phenomena is a preventive effort in dealing with some dangerous and detrimental selfie activities. Such an effort is also necessitated in order to re-upload fundamental values in the study of Islamic law. Reviewing the selfie phenomenon practiced by the millennial generation is a theological aspect of Islamic law which is taken and examined from the fundamental values of achieving the objectives of Islamic law (maqāshid syarì’ah). In this context, mashlahât is understood as a fundamental value of Islamic law which has the
aim of achieving and creating goodness for all mankind both Muslims and adherents of other religions. Having such understanding, it is clear that the fundamental values of Islamic law are able to provide proper insight and response to the selfie phenomenon.

In the practice and application of the concept of mashlahât as an effort to provide control over the rise of the selfie phenomenon, mashlahât is urgent to be used as a consideration for anyone when conducting selfie activities. Having such consideration in mind, someone can determine whether his/her selfie activities will bring mashlahât or mafsadât. With such urgency, it is hoped that the concept of mashlahât and mafsadât approaches has a role in dampening and controlling the rampant selfie activities done by the current millennial generation.

In the Islamic teaching, everyone is responsible for their actions and they will be accounted for what they have done in front of Allah. This is in accordance with Allah’s sayings in the holy Quran, such as “Kullu nafsīn bimā kasabat rahīnah” (every soul will be (held) in pledge for its deeds),63 and “Lâ yusʿālu ʾammā yafʿālu wahuṃ yusʿalʿūn” (He (Allah) can not be questioned for His acts, but they will be questioned (for theirs))64 and with the Prophet Muhammad’s saying: “Kullukum rāʾīn wa kullukum masʿūlun ʿan raʿyatihi” (every of you is a leader and every of you is held accountable for his/her leadership).65 This is because Islam teaches us that every person is a leader at its different level of leadership with all its facilities; at least someone is a leader for himself/herself. Thus, he/she will be accounted for his/her actions in carrying his/her leadership.66

Monitoring the selfie phenomenon practiced by the millennial generation based on the mashlahât and mafsadât approach is sought to protect selfie takers from any negative impacts (mafsadât). Related to the achievement of Islamic law’s objectives (maqāshid syari’ah), the following conditions may be used to monitor selfie activities: first, a selfie photo must not accompany any caption of insult to religion, its teachings, and its practices and it is a form of caring and protecting the existence of religion (ḥifzh al-dīn). Second, selfie must not conducted by endangering one’s life or safety or hurting one’s body and it is the form of caring and protecting human life (ḥifzh al-nafs). Third, selfie involving family and children without endangering their life and safety means caring and protecting one’s offspring (ḥifzh al-nast). Fourth, taking selfie photos that aims to bring happiness to one’s mind without overdoing it means caring and protecting one’s mind (ḥifzh al-ʿaql). Fifth, taking selfie

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photos without spending one’s property unwisely means caring and protecting one’s wealth (hifżh al-māl). Sixth, taking selfie photos without damaging the environment is a form of protecting the existence of the environment (hifżh al-bi’ah). Even, when the photos’ background involve beautiful sceneries, they might invite other people and institutions to preserve them. Seventh, selfie photos must not include any caption of contempt to others and it is the form of caring and protecting one’s self-esteem (hifżh al-‘irdh). Eighth, taking selfie photos together with other people aimed for fertilizing togetherness among them may become an effort to create and maintain unity and solidarity of one person to another which eventually can safeguard a nation’s integration (hifżh al-dawlah).

Conclusion

The tendency of most people to take selfies seems unstoppable and it is very possible that their use will increase. This is due to unstoppable technological developments and the human need for technology has been a basic one. Selfie has both positive impacts (mashlaḥāt) and negative ones (mafsadāt). One way to dampen the rampant selfie phenomenon is employing the mashlaḥāt and mafsadāt approach. This approach gives consideration to selfie takers of whether their selfie brings mashlaḥāt or mafsadāt. Such approach is expected to be able to reduce various problems that arise and negative impacts resulted from the selfie. This approach must also be used as a means for controlling the selfie phenomenon practiced by the millennial generation today. Selfie should only be done if it gives benefit and goodness (mashlaḥāt), otherwise it should be avoided.

From reviewing the selfie phenomenon using the mashlaḥāt approach, selfie must be a means that brings benefits and goodness. The benefits may be in the form of motivating, encouraging, and nurturing good relations among people as well as being a forum for promoting economic products honestly. This research is only limited to observe and review the selfie phenomenon practiced by the millennial generation employing the mashlaḥāt and mafsadāt approach. The significance of this research is to provide an understanding of the impacts of taking selfies, particularly in the effort of avoiding its negative impacts (mafsadāt). It is hoped that future researchers will conduct field research and collect proper data directly so that the analysis process using the perspective of mashlaḥāt and mafsadāt can be more justified.

References


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