

TikTok and the Shifting Standards of Marital Happiness from a Hadith Perspective

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Abstract: TikTok has become more than an entertainment platform; its algorithmic feed increasingly participates in defining what users perceive as a desirable life, including an ideal marriage. Short videos featuring gifts, travel, housing, income, domestic role-sharing, and romantic gestures can be repeatedly encountered in visually attractive and readily comparable forms. This study examines how such exposure may shift standards of marital happiness and asks how prophetic traditions can offer an ethical framework for evaluating marriage in an algorithmic media environment. Using a qualitative library-based design and thematic hadith analysis, the study integrates hadiths on the direction of comparison, *qana'ah*, gratitude, holistic evaluation of one's spouse, and goodness toward family with contemporary scholarship on TikTok personalization, social comparison, and relationship satisfaction. The findings show that the principal problem is not aspirational content itself but the conversion of curated representations into external marital benchmarks. Hadith redirects evaluation from visible performance to lived relational quality and from escalating comparison to proportional appreciation of existing blessings. As its conceptual contribution, the study formulates digital *qana'ah* as an ethical discipline consisting of representational awareness, comparative filtering, reflective gratitude, holistic spousal evaluation, and non-mimetic improvement. This concept extends *qana'ah* from an individual ethic of sufficiency into a relational and epistemic competence for negotiating algorithmically intensified comparison. The study argues that algorithms may organize what appears on a feed, but prophetic values should retain authority over what counts as a good and happy marriage.

Keywords: *TikTok; hadith; marital happiness; digital qana'ah; social comparison*

INTRODUCTION

Social media has moved beyond communication and entertainment to become an environment in which ideals of normality, success, attractiveness, and happiness are continuously produced. In Indonesia, the reach of short-video platforms has made TikTok a particularly influential part of everyday digital life; national digital reports document the scale of social-media use and the prominence of TikTok

among connected users.¹ This scale matters for marriage because the platform does not merely host interpersonal communication. It also circulates highly visible narratives about what a loving spouse should do, what a successful household should own, and what a happy marriage should look like.

TikTok differs from media that depend almost entirely on deliberate user choice because its For You feed ranks content using interaction signals, video information, and patterns of use.² Empirical work on personalization has shown that the platform's recommendations can rapidly adapt to behavioural signals.³ Consequently, a user who pauses on or repeatedly watches content about luxury gifts, romantic surprises, idealized husbands or wives, family travel, or carefully staged domestic routines may encounter similar material with increasing frequency. What begins as casual viewing can therefore become a recurrent symbolic environment against which ordinary married life is assessed.

Algorithmic experience is not purely technical. Users develop interpretations of why certain videos appear and how the platform 'knows' their preferences, and this algorithmic awareness influences how they understand their own digital experience.⁴ Research on TikTok feeds also indicates an ongoing balance between exploration and exploitation in recommendation systems,⁵ while technical commentary has emphasized the unusually strong role of recommendation in the platform's design.⁶ These findings are important for marital studies because repeated exposure can create an illusion of prevalence: what appears often on the feed may be mistaken for what commonly occurs in real marriages.

Repeated exposure is also relevant to identity and value formation. A review of TikTok research suggests that algorithmic recommendations can intersect with the ways users perceive and negotiate their identities and personal values.⁷ Within marriage, this process can affect the interpretive standards through which a person evaluates a spouse. A husband's reliability, patience, or involvement in childcare may become less salient than his failure to reproduce a viral romantic gesture; a wife's everyday emotional labour may be undervalued when public displays of

¹ Simon Kemp, 'Digital 2025: Indonesia', DataReportal (2025) <<https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2025-indonesia>> [accessed 22 August 2026].

² TikTok, 'How TikTok Recommends Videos #ForYou', TikTok Newsroom (2020) <<https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-us/how-tiktok-recommends-videos-for-you>> [accessed 22 August 2026].

³ Maximilian Boeker and Aleksandra Urman, 'An Empirical Investigation of Personalization Factors on TikTok', in Proceedings of the ACM Web Conference 2022 (New York: Association for Computing Machinery, 2022), pp. 2298–2309 <<https://doi.org/10.1145/3485447.3512102>>.

⁴ Shiv Issar, 'The Social Construction of Algorithms in Everyday Life: Examining TikTok Users' Understanding of the Platform's Algorithm', International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction, 40.18 (2024), 5384–5398 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/10447318.2023.2233138>>.

⁵ Karan Vombatkere and others, 'TikTok and the Art of Personalization: Investigating Exploration and Exploitation on Social Media Feeds', in Proceedings of the ACM Web Conference 2024 (New York: Association for Computing Machinery, 2024), pp. 3789–3797 <<https://doi.org/10.1145/3589334.3645600>>.

⁶ Min Zhang and Yiqun Liu, 'A Commentary of TikTok Recommendation Algorithms in MIT Technology Review 2021', Fundamental Research, 1.6 (2021), 846–847 <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fmre.2021.11.015>>.

⁷ Claudiu Gabriel Ionescu and Monica Licu, 'Are TikTok Algorithms Influencing Users' Self-Perceived Identities and Personal Values? A Mini Review', Social Sciences, 12.8 (2023), 465 <<https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12080465>>.

affection become the dominant visual script. The issue is therefore not only behaviour but also the epistemic question of which evidence is considered meaningful when judging marital quality.

Recent Indonesian studies indicate that intensive TikTok use can be associated with stronger social-comparison tendencies among Generation Z women.⁸ Research on flexing content likewise shows how highly curated displays may stimulate comparison among young users.⁹ Although these studies do not directly measure marital satisfaction, they establish an important mechanism: TikTok can provide a dense field of upward comparison in which other people's possessions, bodies, lifestyles, and relationships become reference points for self-evaluation. When the same mechanism is transferred into marriage, comparison is no longer limited to the self; it extends to the partner and to the relationship as a unit.

Other Indonesian evidence associates TikTok-related comparison with body dissatisfaction,¹⁰ and research in Denpasar has placed social comparison as a mediating variable between TikTok use and self-esteem.¹¹ These findings strengthen the argument that repeated digital comparison can alter subjective evaluation even when the comparison target is incomplete or selectively presented. In marital life, a similar evaluative distortion may occur when users compare the full complexity of their own marriage with a brief, edited representation of another couple's most attractive moments.

International research provides parallel evidence. Studies of youth have linked TikTok use, social comparison, and self-esteem,¹² while research on women users has differentiated between active and passive TikTok use and shown the importance of comparison processes in body-image outcomes.¹³ Daily upward comparison on social media has also been identified as a mechanism connecting social-media use and well-being.¹⁴ The cumulative implication is that the psychological effects of digital media depend not only on screen time but on how

⁸ Faiza Aulia and Muhammad Ilmi Hatta, 'Pengaruh Intensitas Penggunaan TikTok terhadap Perbandingan Sosial pada Perempuan Generasi Z', Bandung Conference Series: Psychology Science, 5.2 (2025), 1165–1172 <<https://doi.org/10.29313/bcps.v5i2.18910>>.

⁹ Patricia Nathania and Lisa Esti Puji Hartanti, 'Pengaruh Konten Media Sosial Terhadap Social Comparison Pada Orang Muda di Jakarta (Studi pada Konten Flexing Influencer TikTok @siscakohl)', Jurnal Audience: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi, 8.2 (2025), 246–265 <<https://doi.org/10.33633/ja.v8i2.13496>>.

¹⁰ Estrite Abigael Ruthe Angel Nugraha, Sahat Saragih, and Eko April Ariyanto, 'TikTok sebagai Cermin Sosial: Eksplorasi Hubungan Social Comparison dan Body Dissatisfaction', JIWA: Jurnal Psikologi Indonesia, 3.2 (2025), 145–153 <<https://doi.org/10.30996/jiwa.v3i02.12805>>.

¹¹ A. A. A. Meisya Dewi and Nofha Rina, 'Pengaruh Penggunaan TikTok terhadap Self-Esteem dengan Social Comparison sebagai Variabel Mediasi pada Generasi Z di Kota Denpasar', Ganaya: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora, 8.4 (2025), 199–209 <<https://doi.org/10.37329/ganaya.v8i4.4957>>.

¹² Qaribu Yahaya Nasidi, Abdulkarim Bello Norde, Jamila Mohammed Dahiru, and Isyaku Hassan, 'TikTok Usage, Social Comparison, and Self-Esteem Among the Youth: Moderating Role of Gender', Galactica Media: Journal of Media Studies, 6.2 (2024), 121–137 <<https://doi.org/10.46539/gmd.v6i2.467>>.

¹³ Wenjing Pan, Zhe Mu, Zexuan Zhao, and Zheng Tang, 'Female Users' TikTok Use and Body Image: Active Versus Passive Use and Social Comparison Processes', Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, 26.1 (2023), 3–10 <<https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2022.0169>>.

¹⁴ Andrea Irmer and Florian Schmiedek, 'Associations between Youth's Daily Social Media Use and Well-Being Are Mediated by Upward Comparisons', Communications Psychology, 1 (2023), 12 <<https://doi.org/10.1038/s44271-023-00013-0>>.

users position themselves in relation to the people, lifestyles, and relationships they repeatedly observe.

The broader literature on social networking sites explains why this matters. Digital platforms dramatically expand opportunities to compare oneself with positively selected representations of others.¹⁵ Yet the evidence also cautions against treating all comparison as uniformly harmful; contemporary reviews distinguish between destructive envy, neutral evaluation, and potentially motivating comparison.¹⁶ This distinction is essential. The present study does not argue that couples should never learn from examples seen online. The problem arises when curated and algorithmically repeated representations acquire the authority to define the minimum conditions of a happy marriage.

From a hadith perspective, this transformation is significant because prophetic teachings do not restrict marital ethics to legal rights and obligations. They also regulate attention, desire, gratitude, judgment, and the way spouses recognize each other's virtues and deficiencies. The prophetic tradition therefore provides resources for a deeper question than whether TikTok is 'good' or 'bad': how should Muslims evaluate blessings and marital quality when digital systems continuously present more attractive alternatives? This question connects classical moral concepts to a contemporary media ecology in which comparison is no longer occasional but personalized, repetitive, and visually compelling.

The novelty of this study lies in approaching the shift in marital standards as an epistemic and relational problem and in formulating the concept of digital qana'ah. Qana'ah is commonly discussed as contentment, sufficiency, or restraint in relation to material desire. Here it is extended into the digital sphere as a discipline for deciding what deserves attention, which comparisons should be trusted, how a spouse should be evaluated, and how aspiration can be separated from mimetic pressure. The study therefore asks two questions: how does TikTok contribute to the shifting standards of marital happiness, and how can hadith reconstruct those standards in an algorithmic culture?

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative, library-based design with a thematic hadith method (mawdu'i). Thematic analysis is appropriate because the question of marital happiness in digital culture cannot be adequately explained through a single report. The corpus therefore brings together hadiths concerning the direction of worldly comparison, qana'ah and sufficiency, gratitude for blessings, proportional evaluation of one's spouse, and excellence toward family. Primary hadith texts were identified in authoritative collections, especially Sahih Muslim and Jami' al-

¹⁵ Philippe Verduyn, Nino Gugushvili, Karlijn Massar, Karin Täht, and Ethan Kross, 'Social Comparison on Social Networking Sites', *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 36 (2020), 32–37 <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2020.04.002>>.

¹⁶ Adrian Meier and Benjamin K. Johnson, 'Social Comparison and Envy on Social Media: A Critical Review', *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 45 (2022), 101302 <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2022.101302>>.

Tirmidhi, and were interpreted in relation to their wording, normative orientation, and contemporary relevance.

The analysis proceeds on three levels. First, textual analysis identifies the key semantic structure of the hadiths, especially the language of looking, sufficiency, belittling blessings, disliking a spouse's character, and goodness toward family. Second, intertextual analysis connects these reports so that qana'ah is not isolated from gratitude, relational responsibility, or balanced judgment. Third, contextual analysis places the hadith framework in dialogue with research on social comparison and digital well-being; studies of passive social-media use demonstrate that comparison and emotion regulation can mediate psychological outcomes.¹⁷ This three-layered procedure allows the prophetic material to function as an interpretive framework rather than as a decorative religious quotation added after a modern psychological analysis.

Secondary literature was selected according to four criteria: it addresses TikTok personalization or algorithmic recommendation; examines social comparison and well-being; investigates social-media use in relation to romantic or marital satisfaction; or discusses qana'ah, religiosity, and psychological well-being. Publications available up to November 2025 were prioritized, in line with the temporal scope of the study. Newsroom and digital-report sources were used only to establish platform mechanisms or contemporary digital context, whereas causal and relational claims were grounded primarily in peer-reviewed research.

TikTok is treated here as a specific instance of algorithmic social media rather than as an intrinsically harmful technology. The unit of analysis is the process by which repeatedly visible representations can become marital benchmarks. Accordingly, the study does not infer that watching a particular video automatically causes marital dissatisfaction. Instead, it develops a conceptual explanation of how personalized exposure, social comparison, and prophetic ethics intersect, and then formulates a hadith-based framework that can be tested empirically in future research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Algorithmic Construction of Marital Happiness

The first finding is that TikTok contributes to an algorithmic construction of marital standards. In conventional social settings, comparison is usually limited by geography, kinship, friendship, or class proximity. TikTok removes much of that limitation and creates a continuous stream of couples from different economic backgrounds, cultures, and countries. Because recommendation systems learn from attention, unusual or highly aspirational examples can become disproportionately present in an individual's feed. Frequency of appearance may then be misread as frequency in real life. A user who repeatedly sees husbands giving expensive gifts

¹⁷ Zhiying Yue, Renwen Zhang, and Jun Xiao, 'Passive Social Media Use and Psychological Well-Being during the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Role of Social Comparison and Emotion Regulation', *Computers in Human Behavior*, 127 (2022), 107050 <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2021.107050>>.

may begin to experience such behaviour as ordinary marital competence even though the feed is not a representative sample of marriages.

This process is intensified by the visual reduction of marital happiness. Flowers, gifts, holidays, restaurants, houses, vehicles, birthday surprises, and chore-sharing performed before a camera are easier to record and circulate than patience, fidelity, financial discipline, conflict repair, or quiet companionship during illness. Research on Instagram indicates that browsing can relate to well-being through both social-comparison and emotional-contagion mechanisms.¹⁸ At the same time, upward comparison can sometimes inspire users rather than damage them.¹⁹ These findings prevent a simplistic moral panic. The problem is not that idealized content exists; it is that an attractive representation can lose its context and be converted into a universal requirement for marital happiness.

The distinction between lived happiness and displayed happiness is therefore central. Lived happiness is relational and processual. It may coexist with financial limitation, disagreement, fatigue, or negotiated domestic roles because its quality depends on how spouses communicate, repair conflict, carry responsibility, and remain present over time. Displayed happiness, by contrast, must be legible to an audience. It benefits from brevity, visual clarity, novelty, and emotional intensity. A thirty-second video can therefore become more memorable than the unrecorded routines through which a marriage is actually sustained.

This asymmetry produces what may be called representational compression: complex marriages are reduced to a small number of visible signs, and those signs are then treated as if they exhaust the meaning of marital quality. The shift is epistemically significant. Instead of asking whether a spouse is trustworthy, responsible, kind, and willing to grow, a user may increasingly ask whether the marriage resembles a recognizable online script. A platform optimized for engagement thus does not directly decree what marriage should be, but it can privilege certain images strongly enough that they begin to function as common-sense standards.

2. Social Comparison and the Emergence of Marital Benchmarking

The second finding concerns the movement from individual comparison to relational comparison. Social-media research shows that comparison can shape self-evaluation and mental well-being; studies of Instagram have identified social comparison as an important mediating mechanism.²⁰ In marriage, however, the object of comparison expands. Users may ask whether their spouse is as attentive as another person's spouse, whether their household is as successful, or why they

¹⁸ Suyoung Choi and Eun-Mee Kim, 'Between Instagram Browsing and Subjective Well-Being: Social Comparison or Emotional Contagion?', *Media Psychology*, 24.6 (2021), 866-890 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/15213269.2020.1824120>>.

¹⁹ Adrian Meier, Alicia Gilbert, Sophie Börner, and Daniel Possler, 'Instagram Inspiration: How Upward Comparison on Social Network Sites Can Contribute to Well-Being', *Journal of Communication*, 70.5 (2020), 721-743 <<https://doi.org/10.1093/joc/jqaa025>>.

²⁰ Alberto Stefana, Antonios Dakanalis, Matteo Mura, Fabrizia Colmegna, and Massimo Clerici, 'Instagram Use and Mental Well-Being: The Mediating Role of Social Comparison', *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 210.12 (2022), 960-965 <<https://doi.org/10.1097/NMD.0000000000001577>>.

are not treated in the way a viral video depicts. This study calls that process marital benchmarking: the evaluation of one's marriage through external standards selected from digital representations.

Marital benchmarking is risky because the compared couples rarely share equivalent circumstances. Income, age of marriage, number of children, disability, caregiving burdens, extended-family support, housing, debt, culture, and occupational schedules are largely invisible in short-form video. Yet visible outcomes can be compared without those background variables. Research on a couple social comparison has shown that comparison processes can be related to relationship quality,²¹ while work on upward comparison in mobile social media identifies envy as a relevant mechanism and marital quality as a potential moderator.²² The relationship is therefore plausibly bidirectional: marital conditions influence how comparison is experienced, while repeated comparison may reshape how the marriage is judged.

This interpretation is consistent with broader research on social media and relationship satisfaction. Studies have reported associations between patterns of social-media use and relationship satisfaction,²³ and research on social-media addiction suggests that psychological distress can mediate the relationship between problematic use and lower satisfaction.²⁴ Other scholarship maps pathways from excessive social-media use to relational conflict and negative outcomes.²⁵ Shifting standards of happiness therefore do not occur in isolation; they interact with screen time, divided attention, jealousy, and the quality of face-to-face communication.

Phubbing provides a concrete example of how digital attention enters marriage. Research among married couples has associated phubbing with relationship satisfaction through relational and psychological pathways,²⁶ while another study found that social-media addiction and phubbing help explain the relationship between basic psychological needs and relationship satisfaction.²⁷

²¹ Sara Petrilli, Miriam Parise, Silvio Carlo Ripamonti, and Silvia Donato, 'Couple Social Comparisons and Relationship Quality: A Path Analysis Model', *Informing Science: The International Journal of an Emerging Transdiscipline*, 27 (2024), 1-12 <<https://doi.org/10.28945/5281>>.

²² Wei Wang, Mingzhu Wang, Qian Hu, Pengcheng Wang, Li Lei, and Suo Jiang, 'Upward Social Comparison on Mobile Social Media and Depression: The Mediating Role of Envy and the Moderating Role of Marital Quality', *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 270 (2020), 143-149 <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2020.03.173>>.

²³ Illia Yahiaiev, Marta Savych, and Vladyslava Keller, 'The Connection between Social Media Use and Relationship Satisfaction', *Bulletin of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. Psychology*, 2.12 (2020), 109-114 <[https://doi.org/10.17721/BSP.2020.2\(12\).20](https://doi.org/10.17721/BSP.2020.2(12).20)>.

²⁴ Begum Satici, Ahmet Rifat Kayis, and Mark D. Griffiths, 'Exploring the Association Between Social Media Addiction and Relationship Satisfaction: Psychological Distress as a Mediator', *International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction*, 21.4 (2023), 2037-2051 <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-021-00658-0>>.

²⁵ Skye Bouffard, Deanna Giglio, and Zane Zheng, 'Social Media and Romantic Relationship: Excessive Social Media Use Leads to Relationship Conflicts, Negative Outcomes, and Addiction via Mediated Pathways', *Social Science Computer Review*, 40.6 (2022), 1523-1541 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/08944393211013566>>.

²⁶ Shuaa Aljasir, 'Present but Absent in the Digital Age: Testing a Conceptual Model of Phubbing and Relationship Satisfaction among Married Couples', *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*, 2022 (2022), 1402751 <<https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/1402751>>.

²⁷ Hüseyin Buğra Karaman and Coşkun Arslan, 'The Mediating Role of Social Media Addiction and Phubbing in Basic Psychological Needs in Relationships and Relationship

Although phubbing is not the primary focus here, it illustrates an important point: digital media can affect marriage through both content and attention. A spouse may compare the person in front of them with an idealized figure on the screen while simultaneously giving the screen more attention than the relationship itself.

Social-media-related conflict also confirms that digital life has become part of contemporary relationship ecology. Research on romantic relationships shows that social-media activity can escalate conflict when behaviour, messages, and expectations are poorly managed.²⁸ Earlier work among married Facebook users likewise found that use intensity was relevant to models of marital satisfaction.²⁹ These findings cannot be mechanically transferred to TikTok, but they establish that digitally mediated evaluation, attention, jealousy, and conflict are not marginal issues. They form part of the environment in which contemporary spouses interpret each other.

More recent research on attachment anxiety in the digital era has also highlighted the contribution of social-media jealousy and electronic partner surveillance to relationship satisfaction.³⁰ TikTok-based marital benchmarking represents another form of externalized evaluation. Instead of negotiating internal standards through communication, spouses can import expectations from a feed whose selection logic is engagement rather than fairness, representativeness, or family welfare. The result is a subtle transfer of evaluative authority from the couple's lived reality to an algorithmically curated social field.

3. Prophetic Reorientation of Comparison, Qana'ah, and Spousal Evaluation

The hadith tradition offers a corrective at the level where algorithmic comparison becomes morally consequential: the direction of attention. Abu Hurayrah reports that the Prophet instructed believers to look at those below them in worldly matters rather than continually at those above them, because this is more likely to prevent them from belittling God's blessings. The report does not deny economic hierarchy, aspiration, or learning from people who possess more. Its concern is evaluative distortion: repeated upward comparison can make a real blessing appear insignificant merely because a more spectacular example has become the reference point.

انظروا إلى من أسفل منكم ولا تنظروا إلى من هو فوقكم فهو أجدر أن لا تزدروا نعمة الله

"Look at those who are below you and do not look at those who are above you, for that is more likely to prevent you from belittling the blessing of Allah." (Sahih Muslim, no. 2963)

Satisfaction', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 15 (2024), 1291638 <<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1291638>>.

²⁸ Abdulgaffar Olawale Arikewuyo, Taiwo Temitope Lasisi, Saudat Salah Abdulbaqi, Aisha Imam Omoloso, and Halima Oluwaseyi Arikewuyo, 'Evaluating the Use of Social Media in Escalating Conflicts in Romantic Relationships', *Journal of Public Affairs*, 22.1 (2022), e2331 <<https://doi.org/10.1002/pa.2331>>.

²⁹ Fizza Iqbal and Humaira Jami, 'Effect of Facebook Use Intensity Upon Marital Satisfaction Among Pakistani Married Facebook Users: A Model Testing', *Pakistan Journal of Psychological Research*, 34.1 (2019), 191–213 <<https://doi.org/10.33824/PJPR.2019.34.1.11>>.

³⁰ Sarafina Métellus and others, 'Attachment Anxiety and Relationship Satisfaction in the Digital Era: The Contribution of Social Media Jealousy and Electronic Partner Surveillance', *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy* (2025) <<https://doi.org/10.1111/jmft.70074>>.

In an algorithmic environment, this prophetic direction acquires new practical significance. ‘Looking upward’ is no longer an occasional encounter with a wealthier neighbour or a more visibly romantic couple. It can be produced for hours through personalized recommendation. The hadith therefore functions as an epistemic discipline of attention. What users repeatedly observe shapes the baseline from which they interpret their own lives. In marriage, blessings may include reliability, honesty, emotional presence, responsibility, patience, or care during hardship – qualities that are often less visually dramatic than a luxury gift but more consequential for the durability of a relationship.

A second prophetic foundation is the hadith linking success with sufficient provision and a heart made content with what God has given. The report distinguishes objective sufficiency from subjective contentment. These dimensions do not always move together. Material conditions can improve while satisfaction declines if the comparison standard rises even faster. This makes qana’ah particularly relevant to algorithmic culture, where the next superior example is continuously available.

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ أَسْلَمَ وَرُزِقَ كَفَافًا وَقَنَّعَهُ اللَّهُ بِمَا آتَاهُ

“Successful is the one who has embraced Islam, has been provided with what is sufficient, and whom Allah has made content with what He has given.” (Sahih Muslim, no. 1054)

Research on Muslim couples supports the view that marital satisfaction cannot be reduced to material abundance. Studies of marriages formed through ta’aruf emphasize the relevance of religious meaning in the way couples understand satisfaction,³¹ while research on families living with parents-in-law identifies marital adjustment and religiosity as factors related to marital satisfaction.³² These findings are compatible with the hadith emphasis on sufficiency, meaning, and relational adjustment rather than endless accumulation. They also caution against measuring marital success solely through commodities that can be displayed online.

Qana’ah must not be misunderstood as a religious justification for violence, neglect of maintenance, injustice, or a spouse’s refusal to fulfil obligations. It operates in the moral regulation of desire and evaluation, not in the cancellation of rights. Contemporary intervention research suggests that qana’ah-based coping can contribute to psychological well-being,³³ and studies of consumption identify qana’ah as relevant to restraining hedonically driven behaviour.³⁴ Contemporary

³¹ Muhammad Zein Permana and Asfahani Kurnia, ‘Puas Sesuai Syari’at: Kepuasan Pernikahan pada Pasangan yang Menikah dengan Cara Ta’aruf’, *Jurnal Psikologi Islam dan Budaya*, 4.2 (2021), 107–118 <<https://doi.org/10.15575/jpib.v4i2.11791>>.

³² Ainun Nadhirah and Siti Khorriyatul Khotimah, ‘Marital Satisfaction among Families Living with Parents-in-Law: The Role of Marital Adjustment and Religiosity’, *Humanitas: Indonesian Psychological Journal*, 19.2 (2022), 129–137 <<https://doi.org/10.26555/humanitas.v19i2.50>>.

³³ Ari Khusumadewi, Mayang Pramesti, and Ayong Lianawati, ‘Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Qanaah-Based Coping Intervention to Improve Psychological Well-Being in Islamic Boarding School Students: A Quasi-Experimental Study’, *KONSELOR*, 14.2 (2025), 85–92 <<https://doi.org/10.24036/02025142115-0-86>>.

³⁴ Wulan Muawaliyah and Ahmad Saifuddin, ‘Consumptive Behavior in Female University Students: Qana’ah and Hedonic Lifestyle as Predictors’, *Islamic Guidance and Counseling Journal*, 6.1 (2023), 70–82 <<https://doi.org/10.25217/igcj.v6i1.3241>>.

Islamic scholarship likewise links qana'ah with inner stability and mental well-being.³⁵ The digital context, however, requires an extension: contentment must become not only a response after consumption but also a competence for managing what one repeatedly sees, compares, and desires.

Prophetic ethics also corrects partial evaluation of a spouse. The Prophet instructed a believing man not to hate a believing woman absolutely because, if he dislikes one trait, he may be pleased with another. The ethical principle is broader than gendered wording: one deficiency should not erase an entire field of goodness. TikTok can encourage highly specific indicators of an 'ideal' spouse—particular gifts, verbal styles, income levels, public affection, or domestic performances. The hadith resists this categorical error by requiring proportional judgment. A spouse is a whole person with strengths, limitations, history, obligations, and room for growth.

لَا يَفْرُكُ مُؤْمِنٌ مُؤْمِنَةً إِنْ كَرِهَ مِنْهَا خُلُقًا رَضِيَ مِنْهَا آخَرَ

"A believing man should not hate a believing woman; if he dislikes one of her characteristics, he will be pleased with another." (Sahih Muslim, no. 1469)

The same reorientation appears in the prophetic criterion of goodness toward family. The statement that the best believers are those who are best to their families relocates evaluation from public image to relational conduct. A marriage can appear ordinary online yet be marked by trust, mutual respect, conflict repair, and dependable care. Conversely, a visually romantic account does not prove the quality of interaction when the camera is off. Hadith thus shifts the centre of judgment from visible happiness to lived happiness: from what attracts an audience to what actually sustains a household.

4. Digital Qana'ah as a Prophetic Framework for Marital Happiness

Integrating the hadith material with the empirical literature, this study formulates digital qana'ah as an ethical capacity to preserve sufficiency and proportional judgment in an environment that constantly displays other people's lives. It is not simply a recommendation to reduce screen time, nor an anti-technology stance. It is a structured form of moral agency by which users recognize the selective nature of digital representation, regulate destructive comparison, remember concrete blessings, evaluate spouses holistically, and pursue improvement without copying another household's visible script.

The first dimension is representational awareness. Users understand that a video is selected, framed, edited, and detached from many variables that determine a couple's actual life. The second is comparative filtering: users learn to identify accounts or content patterns that consistently produce contempt for their own spouse or a sense that ordinary blessings are worthless. Because interaction influences future recommendation, reducing engagement with such content is both a behavioural and an epistemic act. The prophetic command concerning the

³⁵ Sri Melati, Ahmad Zuhri, and Jufri Naldo, 'Qanā'ah dan Pengaruhnya terhadap Kesehatan Jiwa Menurut Buya Hamka dalam Tafsir Al-Azhar', Al-Fahmu: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir, 4.2 (2025), 634–648 <<https://doi.org/10.58363/alfahmu.v4i2.626>>.

direction of one's gaze is translated here into management of follows, watch duration, searches, and repeated interaction.

The third dimension is reflective gratitude. This does not mean denying dissatisfaction or suppressing legitimate needs. It means deliberately identifying the forms of good that are already present before defining the marriage by what it lacks. The fourth is holistic spousal evaluation. Instead of allowing one viral criterion to become a total judgment, spouses assess patterns of responsibility, care, honesty, emotional availability, cooperation, and willingness to improve across time. These two dimensions directly counter the visual bias of social media, which makes spectacular acts more salient than ordinary but durable virtues.

The fifth dimension is non-mimetic improvement. Digital qana'ah does not forbid aspiration. Couples may learn useful communication techniques, date ideas, financial practices, parenting strategies, or ways of expressing affection from TikTok. What it rejects is the assumption that another couple's visible practice must become one's own standard of worth. A constructive response translates inspiration into an internally articulated need: 'I would like us to spend more uninterrupted time together' is ethically different from 'other husbands do this, why can't you?' The former opens negotiation; the latter imports a comparative hierarchy into the relationship.

This framework reconstructs marital happiness through five shifts: from abundance to sufficiency; from continuous upward comparison to proportionate attention; from visual indicators to relational quality; from partial judgment to holistic evaluation; and from algorithmic standards to prophetic standards. These shifts do not deny economic ambition or the desire to improve a marriage. They establish boundaries so that aspiration does not turn into contempt for one's blessings or humiliation of one's spouse. TikTok may be a source of ideas, but it should not become a tribunal that decides whether a marriage is worthy.

The framework also avoids two extremes. Technological determinism wrongly assumes that TikTok automatically damages marriage, while pure individualism ignores how platform design shapes attention and repetition. A hadith-based approach recognizes both moral agency and environmental influence. Users remain responsible for their judgments, but those judgments are formed inside systems designed to sustain engagement. Digital marital ethics should therefore include algorithmic literacy, communication habits between spouses, and disciplined attention. The ethical task is not to escape every comparison but to preserve the authority to decide which comparisons deserve moral weight.

At its deepest level, digital qana'ah is a correction of algorithmic authority. Algorithms can determine what appears frequently, but frequency should not determine value. Virality can determine what is visible, but visibility should not become the final measure of what is good. In Muslim marriage, standards of happiness must return to relational benefit, responsibility, mu'asharah bi al-ma'ruf, gratitude, and realistic mutual growth. The concept is therefore novel not because qana'ah itself is new, but because it is reconstructed as an epistemic-relational

discipline for the stages of seeing, comparing, judging, desiring, and improving within an algorithmic media ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

TikTok contributes to shifting standards of marital happiness not because the platform intrinsically determines family values, but because visual representation, algorithmic personalization, and social comparison can relocate users' reference points from internal relational experience to external digital examples. Gifts, travel, housing, income, domestic role-sharing, and romantic gestures become marital benchmarks when they are repeatedly seen without adequate context. Under such conditions, what was previously experienced as sufficient may begin to appear deficient, while non-visual virtues of a spouse can lose subjective value.

Hadith provides a corrective through disciplined attention, qana'ah, recognition of blessings, holistic evaluation of a spouse, and excellence toward family. On this basis, the study formulates digital qana'ah through five connected capacities: representational awareness, comparative filtering, reflective gratitude, holistic spousal evaluation, and non-mimetic improvement. Its conceptual novelty lies in extending qana'ah from an individual ethic of contentment into an evaluative discipline for algorithmic environments. The prophetic response to TikTok is therefore not technological rejection but a redistribution of evaluative authority: algorithms may arrange the order of content, but prophetic values must determine the standards by which a household is judged.

The study is limited by its library-based design and does not empirically test digital qana'ah among married TikTok users. Future research can develop a digital qana'ah scale, examine its relationship with social comparison orientation and marital satisfaction, or conduct in-depth interviews with spouses whose expectations have changed through TikTok exposure. Such empirical work would allow this hadith-based concept to develop into an interdisciplinary model that can support Muslim family education and digital literacy.

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