



# The role of digital communication in the psychological well-being of Muslim single mothers

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Changes in modern family structures have led to an increase in the number of single mothers, placing them in a socially and emotionally vulnerable position. Therefore, it is necessary to understand how social support, particularly through digital communication, can contribute to their psychological well-being. This study aims to describe the psychological well-being of Muslim single mothers who are members of digital communities and to map the forms of social support they receive. **Methods:** This study used a descriptive quantitative method involving 36 Muslim single mothers who are active in online communities. Data were collected using the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics in the form of mean values, score distributions, reliability tests, and normality tests. **Findings:** The results showed that family support was the most dominant source of support, followed by support from friends and close relatives, while the most accessed digital platforms were Instagram and Facebook. This instrument has a high level of reliability, but the data were not normally distributed. Digital communication did not show a significant relationship with psychological well-being. This finding indicates that digital communication cannot yet be viewed as a major factor directly related to psychological well-being in the context of this study. **Conclusion:** This study concludes that social media functions as an additional support space, but in this study, digital communication did not show a significant relationship with the psychological well-being of Muslim single mothers. The implication is that efforts to strengthen the psychological well-being of Muslim single mothers need to be directed at strengthening family support and the quality of active and supportive digital interactions, rather than simply encouraging quantitative participation in online communities. **Novelty/Originality of this article:** The novelty of this research lies in its focus on Muslim single mothers in Indonesia and its empirical mapping of the dynamics of the digital social support they access.

**KEYWORDS:** digital communication; Muslim single mothers; online community; psychological well-being; social support.

## 1. Introduction

Changes in family structure in the modern era have had significant social and psychological impacts on various segments of society. One increasingly prominent phenomenon is the growing number of single-parent households, particularly single mothers, which now account for 23% of all households with children under 18 years of age in various countries (Dharani & Balamurugan, 2024). In Indonesia and other countries, this situation often places single mothers in a socially, economically, and emotionally vulnerable position. Dharani & Balamurugan (2024) emphasize that single mothers face the dual

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burden of being both breadwinners and primary caregivers for their children, which can lead to psychosocial stress, emotional exhaustion, and decreased psychological well-being. These pressures are further compounded by strong social stigma in society, particularly in collectivist cultures like Indonesia, which emphasize traditional family structures as the ideal norm.

From an Islamic perspective, the family is a fundamental institution that plays a strategic role in shaping a society that is both materially and spiritually prosperous. Allah SWT emphasizes the importance of protecting vulnerable groups in His statement:

*"And let those who leave behind weak offspring fear Allah, fearing for their welfare"* (Qur'an, An-Nisa: 9),

Indicating that Islam places special emphasis on protecting vulnerable children and families, including those raised by single mothers. This value emphasizes that single mothers are not a group to be viewed with negative stigma, but rather individuals who require social and spiritual support in carrying out their dual roles, including the moral and spiritual responsibility of maintaining family harmony (Raffar et al., 2021).

Psychological well-being is a multidimensional construct encompassing aspects of self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth (Ryff, 2018). In the context of single mothers, achieving psychological well-being presents unique challenges given the complexity of their roles and the limited resources they have. Numerous studies have shown that the psychological well-being of single mothers is influenced by various factors, including economic stress, social stigma, and limited emotional support (Van Gasse & Mortelmans, 2020). According to the Family Stress Model, economic and social stress can diminish parents' psychological well-being, ultimately affecting the quality of family relationships and child development (Masarik & Conger, 2017). However, this model also emphasizes that social support can serve as a buffer or shield that mitigates the negative impact of stress. Empirical findings indicate that single mothers with access to adequate social support tend to have higher levels of psychological well-being, better manage parenting stress, and demonstrate greater resilience in the face of life's challenges (Liblub et al., 2024).

The development of digital technology has created new opportunities for single mothers to gain social support through social media. Digital transformation has fundamentally changed the landscape of interpersonal communication, creating virtual spaces that allow individuals to connect, share experiences, and build communities without geographical limitations. Digital communication has transformed the way people interact, construct identities, and seek emotional support (Walther & Whitty, 2021). Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and WhatsApp groups now serve not only as entertainment but also as spaces for expression and social support, especially for vulnerable groups like single mothers. Digital communication allows them to engage in real-time interactions, share emotional experiences, and receive meaningful social support without the constraints of time and space (Dansu, 2024). The interactive, anonymous, and accessible nature of social media makes it an ideal platform for individuals experiencing social stigma to seek support and validation.

Based on Social Support Theory, social support acts as a buffer against stress, strengthens psychological adaptation, and improves individual well-being (Cohen & McKay, 2020). Through social media, this form of support comes in various dimensions, such as emotional support in the form of empathy and understanding, informational support in the form of advice and practical solutions, and friendship that reduces feelings of loneliness. Recent research shows that mothers who receive emotional and informational support from online communities report lower stress levels and better mental well-being than those without such access (Henton & Swanson, 2023). This theory aligns with the concept of Islamic brotherhood, which emphasizes the importance of brotherhood and mutual support among Muslims, as stated in the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him):

*"The example of the believers in their compassion, mercy, and sympathy for one another is like one body; if one limb aches, the whole body suffers from fever and sleeplessness"* (Narrated by Muslim).

Furthermore, Social Capital Theory posits that active participation in online communities can build two types of social capital: bonding social capital, which refers to strong emotional bonds among members with similar backgrounds, and bridging social capital, which refers to broader, more diverse social networks (Son, 2020). In the context of the single mother community, interactions on social media not only strengthen a sense of togetherness and solidarity but also help build self-confidence and a positive identity amidst social stigma. Research by Dansu (2024) shows that support from virtual communities significantly improves the psychological resilience of single mothers. Similarly, Computer-Mediated Communication Theory asserts that meaningful interpersonal relationships can form without direct physical presence, refuting the assumption that digital communication is impersonal (Walther & Whitty, 2021). Kopacz (2021) also found that Facebook groups for single mothers created social cohesion as well as emotional and informational support. Furthermore, Yue et al. (2024) demonstrated that that positive online interactions reduce loneliness. Hwang et al. (2024) also linked quality digital communication to reduced depressive symptoms in the context of community-based support.

In the context of Muslim communities, social media has also become an important platform for shaping shared religious identity and spirituality. Douglass et al. (2022) show that young Muslims and their parents use social media to build safe communities in which they can express their religious identity without discrimination, while Aini & Lukito (2024) add that the online dissemination of religious teachings strengthens modern Muslim identity and psychological well-being. Muslih & Nashori (2024) also emphasize that religious adjustment and social support based on Islamic values play a significant role in reducing parenting stress among working mothers, which is also relevant for single mothers with double burdens. Thus, digital communication based on Islamic values has the potential to be a means that not only strengthens social support but also deepens spiritual meaning and inner peace, in line with the Islamic teachings of *ta'awun* (mutual assistance) and *takaful ijtimai'i* (social solidarity) as stated in the word of God:

*"And help one another in goodness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and injustice"* (Quran, Al-Ma'idah: 2).

A similar phenomenon can also be seen in Indonesia through online communities such as Single Moms Indonesia (SMI), which is active on Instagram. A study by Noviani & Wijayanti (2022) showed that the @singlemomsindonesia account functions as a safe space for sharing experiences, validating each other's emotions, and exchanging information about daily challenges. It also serves as a digital community support system that improves the psychological well-being of its members. Sumarna (2024) found that social media is an effective channel for emotional regulation for women, including single mothers, while Nurfaiza (2025) showed that social media has become a strategic space for single parents, including Muslim single mothers, to build a positive digital identity and combat social stigma.

However, recent research also reveals the complexity of social media use in the context of maternal well-being. A systematic study by Liblub et al. (2024) found that while online social support showed potential in reducing loneliness, some mothers reported discomfort sharing personal experiences with strangers on digital platforms. Henton & Swanson (2023) in their mixed-methods study showed that mothers who found online support highly valuable actually reported higher levels of stress, suggesting that social media served more as a coping strategy under high pressure. These findings align with a meta-analytic review by Marciano et al. (2024) that synthesized 78 international studies and concluded that the association between social media use and positive well-being was small and inconsistent

across indicators. Similarly, a qualitative study by Facca et al. (2023) found that while digital technology offered quick access to community support and health information, its use triggered feelings of guilt, shame, and self-doubt in new mothers, challenging the claim that digital engagement automatically supports their psychological well-being.

These findings underscore the need for a deeper understanding of how digital communication can be optimized to improve the psychological well-being of single mothers, particularly in the context of the Muslim community in Indonesia, which has unique social and religious dynamics. However, empirical evidence regarding the relationship between digital communication and psychological well-being remains mixed and conflicting. A recent international meta-analysis by Liu et al. (2024) of 292 studies found that the correlation between digital media use and psychological well-being was generally weak and highly dependent on the mode of use, while a systematic review by Plackett et al. (2023) of social media intervention studies also reported highly variable and heterogeneous effectiveness across studies on mental well-being. Onishi (2024), in a study of Japanese parents, including single parents, even found that parenting-related social media use can increase psychological distress in certain conditions of loneliness and parenting anxiety. These inconsistencies suggest that the effects of digital communication on psychological well-being are likely contextual, dependent on the quality of interactions and characteristics of the user group, rather than a straightforward and universal relationship.

Previous studies on the Muslim single mother community itself tend to emphasize the function of social media as a tool for sharing information or self-expression in a descriptive manner, without empirically testing whether such digital engagement is truly related to psychological well-being, and without integrating it with the dimensions of Islamic spirituality. The majority of empirical studies are also still conducted in Western contexts with individualistic cultures (Liu et al., 2024; Plackett et al., 2023), so evidence from Muslim communities based on collectivism and strong religious values is still very limited. Bukhari et al. (2024) add that the challenges of parenting in the digital age require a responsive legal and social framework to support Muslim families in integrating religious values with the realities of modern technology, but direct empirical evidence on the relationship to the psychological well-being of Muslim single mothers is not yet available. This gap is further emphasized: no study has empirically tested the relationship between digital communication and psychological well-being in Muslim single mothers and mapped the forms of online social support they receive. Therefore, the main contribution of this study lies in empirical testing in a collectivist and religious context that has been underrepresented in the literature.

Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by empirically examining how digital communication through social media relates to the psychological well-being of Muslim single mothers, while also mapping the forms of online social support they receive. The main research questions posed are: How does digital communication through social media play a role in the psychological well-being of Muslim single mothers in the digital era, and what forms of online social support contribute most to their identity, spirituality, and resilience? Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the study of social psychology and communication based on Islamic values; practically, its findings can serve as a reference for the single mother community, socio-religious institutions, psychology practitioners, and policymakers in optimizing social media as a responsive digital support system, while supporting the deconstruction of social stigma through digital empowerment integrated with Islamic spiritual values.

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Research design

This study uses a descriptive quantitative approach with the aim of obtaining an overview of the psychological well-being of members of the single mother community in the era of digital communication through social media. This approach was chosen because it

provides an opportunity for researchers to describe real conditions and to examine how the experience of communicating in digital spaces relates to the psychological well-being of single mothers. In the context of digital communication, a descriptive approach is also considered relevant to understanding how individuals interpret their social interaction experiences in online spaces and how these experiences relate to their psychological well-being (Baltar & Brunet, 2012).

This study focuses on psychological well-being, understood as a positive psychological state that reflects the extent to which individuals are able to feel the meaning of life, social support, positive relationships with others, autonomy, and self-acceptance. Psychological well-being in this study is seen through participants' experiences in using and interacting on various social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok as spaces for communication and social support.

In addition to describing levels of psychological well-being, this study also describes the distribution of participants based on the types of digital communities they participate in. This aims to identify the social media platforms most used by single mothers to build social connections, share experiences, and obtain emotional and psychological support. A descriptive approach allows researchers to present an empirical picture of digital platform usage trends without manipulating the research variables.

## *2.2 Participants and instrument*

The subjects of this study were members of a Muslim single mother community active on various social media platforms. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, based on characteristics relevant to the research objectives. This technique is widely used in community psychology and specific group-based research because it allows researchers to obtain participants who are truly relevant to the research focus (Etikan et al., 2015). The participant criteria in this study included: (1) women with single parent status, (2) Muslims, and (3) active participants in online single mother communities through social media. The selection of online communities as the research context was based on previous research findings showing that digital communities play an important role as a source of social support, especially for socially and psychologically vulnerable groups (Palinkas et al., 2013). A total of 36 participants agreed to participate in this study voluntarily and completed the questionnaire.

The instrument used in this study was the Indonesian version of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), developed and validated by Sulistiani et al. (2022). This scale has a Cronbach's alpha reliability value of 0.85, indicating high internal consistency. The MPSS is a widely used instrument internationally to measure perceived social support from three main sources: family, friends, and significant others. This instrument was originally developed by Zimet et al. (1988) and has been widely used in various cross-cultural studies with good validity and reliability results (Zimet et al., 1990).

Previous research has shown that perceived social support, as measured by the MSPSS, is strongly associated with psychological well-being, mental health, and an individual's ability to cope with stress and life pressures (Stewart et al., 2014). Therefore, the use of the MSPSS in this study is considered relevant to describe the psychological well-being of single mothers who receive support through social interactions on digital media. This scale consists of 12 items measuring three dimensions of social support: family, friends, and significant others. Each item is answered using a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

## *2.3 Data collection and analysis*

Data collection was conducted online using Google Forms, distributed through various single mother community groups on social media. This online data collection method was chosen because it was considered effective and appropriate for participants who are active in digital communities. The use of online surveys allows researchers to reach geographically

dispersed participants and provides flexibility in terms of the time required to complete the questionnaire (Wright, 2005). Furthermore, this method also provides a sense of anonymity that can increase participant honesty in providing responses, especially on personal and psychological topics (Evans & Mathur, 2018).

Before completing the questionnaire, each participant was asked to read and agree to a consent form explaining the purpose of the study, data confidentiality, and the participant's right to participate voluntarily at the beginning of the Google Form. The collected data were then analyzed using Jamovi software version 2.3.28. The analysis was descriptive, to describe the psychological well-being of the participants and the trends in the social media platforms they used. The analysis stages included a reliability test to ensure instrument consistency, a Shapiro–Wilk normality test to examine data distribution, and descriptive analysis in the form of calculating the mean, standard deviation, frequency, and percentage. The Shapiro–Wilk test was used because it is suitable for small to medium sample sizes and has a good level of sensitivity in detecting data distribution (Razali & Wah, 2011).

The choice of descriptive analysis in this study was based on the research objective, which focused on providing an overview of the level of social support, psychological well-being, and characteristics of social media use in the Muslim single mother community. Therefore, descriptive analysis was deemed the most appropriate method because it can systematically present data characteristics through measures of central tendency, dispersion, and distribution, thus providing an empirical picture of the phenomenon under study without testing relationships between variables or drawing causal conclusions. Therefore, the results of the analysis are expected to serve as a basis for further research using an analytical approach to examine relationships between variables in more depth.

The conclusions of this study were drawn from the results of a descriptive analysis, which interpreted the mean values, score distributions, and trends of participants in each dimension of psychological well-being, as well as data on the most frequently used digital community platforms. This interpretation of the results was used to empirically explain how communication experiences in digital spaces contribute to the psychological well-being of single mothers in online communities. The results of this descriptive analysis are expected to provide a clear picture of the level of psychological well-being of single mothers who are members of digital communities, as well as to indicate which social media platforms are most widely used as spaces for sharing, interacting, and obtaining psychological support.

However, this study has limitations, particularly the relatively small sample size of 36 respondents, obtained through purposive sampling based on predetermined characteristics. This situation means that the findings of this study are best understood as an empirical description of the characteristics of the participating respondents, and therefore, the results cannot be generalized to the entire population of Muslim single mothers. Therefore, careful interpretation of the results requires careful consideration of these limitations. Furthermore, this study is expected to serve as a basis for further research involving a larger number of respondents, using more representative sampling techniques, and covering a wider research area, thereby producing findings with greater generalizability.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

#### *3.1 Research results*

The conceptual framework of this research illustrates the main components examined in relation to the psychological well-being of Muslim single mothers within digital communities. The framework provides an overview of how social support, digital communication experiences, and participation in online communities are positioned within the research context. It also serves as a basis for interpreting the descriptive findings regarding participants' psychological well-being and their use of social media as a space for

communication, interaction, and social support. The conceptual framework of the research is presented in Figure 1.

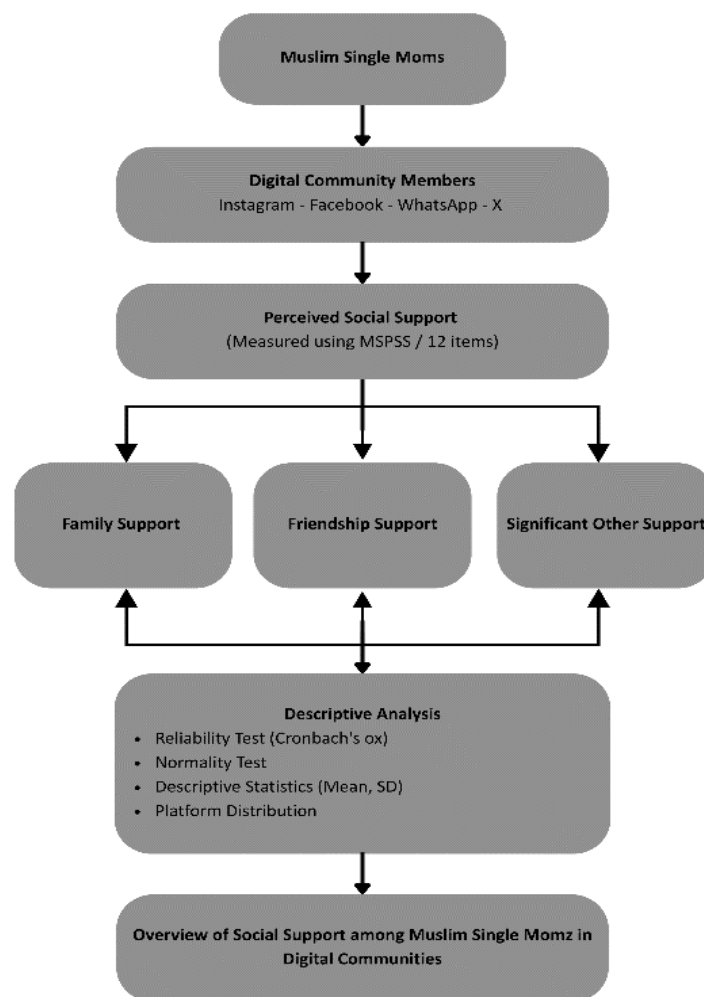


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework of the research

The conceptual framework in this study describes the research flow, which begins with identifying the characteristics of respondents as Muslim single mothers who are members of a digital community. Next, the study measured perceptions of social support using three dimensions of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS): support from family, friends, and significant others. The measurement results were then analyzed descriptively to obtain an overview of the level and characteristics of social support perceived by respondents within the context of the digital community.

Table 1. Demographic data

| Variables          | N  | Mean | Median | Elementary school | Min | Max |
|--------------------|----|------|--------|-------------------|-----|-----|
| Age (years)        | 36 | 35.5 | 35.00  | 6.28              | 25  | 48  |
| Number of children | 36 | 1.69 | 2.00   | 0.95              | 0   | 4   |

In terms of the number of children (Table 1), the analysis shows that respondents had an average of 1.69 children, with a median of 2 children and a range of 0 to 4 children. This finding suggests that most single mothers in this study had one to two children as their primary caregivers. However, the considerable variation in the number of children reflects differences in the level of childcare and household responsibilities faced by each respondent.

In general, these demographic characteristics indicate that the single mothers in this study were of productive age and had childcare responsibilities as part of their daily roles.

These characteristics provide important context for understanding the respondents' need for social support, given that their role as single parents requires them to juggle multiple responsibilities simultaneously. Therefore, the social support they receive, whether from family, friends, or digital communities, is a relevant factor in understanding the psychological well-being of single mothers. These findings indicate that the respondents' demographic characteristics need to be considered in interpreting the research results, as they can provide insight into the life context underlying their experiences of obtaining social support through digital communities.

Table 2. Statistical scale reliability

|       | Cronbach's $\alpha$ |
|-------|---------------------|
| Scale | 0.858               |

The reliability test results for the scale used in this study indicate that the instrument measuring social support and psychological well-being has an excellent level of internal consistency (Table 2). This is demonstrated by the Cronbach's alpha coefficient value of 0.858, which is above the minimum limit recommended in psychological research. This value indicates that the items in the instrument are able to consistently measure the same construct and have a strong correlation with each other.

The high reliability value indicates that the instrument used has adequate stability and reliability in measuring respondents' perceptions of received social support and perceived psychological well-being. Therefore, the instrument can be trusted to produce relatively consistent data when used under similar conditions and with similar respondent characteristics. These results also strengthen the instrument's suitability as a measurement tool in research, allowing the data obtained to serve as a valid basis for further analysis and conclusions.

Table 3. Reliability test results for each item

|    | Item-remainder correlation | If the item falls<br>Cronbach's $\alpha$ |
|----|----------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| K1 | 0.255                      | 0.862                                    |
| K2 | 0.272                      | 0.861                                    |
| K3 | 0.140                      | 0.869                                    |
| K4 | 0.211                      | 0.863                                    |
| T1 | 0.581                      | 0.844                                    |
| T2 | 0.548                      | 0.846                                    |
| T3 | 0.716                      | 0.833                                    |
| T4 | 0.647                      | 0.839                                    |
| S1 | 0.678                      | 0.836                                    |
| S2 | 0.678                      | 0.836                                    |
| S3 | 0.737                      | 0.831                                    |
| S4 | 0.740                      | 0.831                                    |

Based on the results of the item-residual correlation analysis, most items showed a positive relationship with the total score and were at an adequate level, with correlation values ranging from 0.140 to 0.740 (Table 3). This finding indicates that most items have a relevant contribution in measuring the intended construct. However, four statements in the family support dimension (K1–K4) had relatively low correlation values, below 0.30. However, the Cronbach's alpha analysis of the items removed showed that removing any of these items did not significantly increase reliability. The reliability coefficients remained within the range of 0.862 to 0.869, indicating that the instrument's internal consistency was maintained despite the removal of these items.

Based on these considerations, all items were retained as they were still deemed capable of consistently representing the constructs being measured. Furthermore, there was no indication that any items needed to be reversed. These findings indicate that although some items had relatively low item-residual correlations, their contribution to the

instrument's overall internal consistency remained sufficient to warrant item removal. Overall, the results of this analysis indicate that the instrument has a high level of reliability and can be used adequately in research.

Table 4. Descriptive test results

|                   | K1   | K2   | K3   | K4   | T1   | T2   | T3   | T4   | S1   | S2   | S3   | S4   |
|-------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| N                 | 36   | 36   | 36   | 36   | 36   | 36   | 36   | 36   | 36   | 36   | 36   | 36   |
| Mean              | 5.17 | 5.03 | 4.39 | 4.83 | 4.56 | 4.25 | 4.72 | 4.56 | 3.97 | 4.03 | 4.11 | 4.17 |
| Median            | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.00 | 5.50 | 5.00 | 4.50 | 4.50 | 4.50 | 4.50 |
| Elementary school | 1.30 | 1.34 | 1.42 | 1.18 | 1.71 | 1.78 | 1.98 | 1.84 | 1.93 | 1.89 | 1.94 | 1.93 |
| Min               | 3    | 2    | 2    | 3    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 1    |
| Mom               | 7    | 7    | 7    | 7    | 7    | 6    | 7    | 7    | 7    | 7    | 7    | 7    |

Based on the descriptive analysis (Table 4), we obtained an overview of the level of social support received by single mothers from three main sources: family, friends, and significant others. All items on the scale were completed in full by 36 respondents with no missing data, allowing for a comprehensive analysis that represented the overall situation of the respondents. In terms of family support, respondents' average scores ranged from 4.39 to 5.17, with a median score of 5.00 and a standard deviation between 1.18 and 1.42. These results indicate that the majority of respondents perceive family support as relatively high and consistent across individuals. These results indicate that family is one of the sources of social support most perceived by respondents. High scores on this dimension indicate that respondents tend to view family as a supportive force when facing various situations in daily life.

In terms of peer support, mean scores ranged from 4.25 to 4.72, with a median of 5.00 and standard deviations ranging from 1.71 to 1.98. These findings indicate that peer support is moderate, with a greater degree of variation in responses compared to family support. These findings indicate that friends also serve as a source of social support for respondents, although the level of perceived support tends to be more variable than family support. This variation suggests that each respondent's experience of receiving support from friends is not entirely the same. Meanwhile, in terms of support from special people, including partners, close friends, or other important figures, the average score ranged from 3.97 to 4.17, with a median of 4.50 and a standard deviation of 1.89 to 1.94. These results indicate that the level of support from special people is relatively lower than the other two sources of support, and has a more diverse data distribution. This indicates that the presence of important figures outside of family and friends is not felt evenly by all respondents.

A comprehensive analysis reveals that family support is the most dominant source of social support for single mothers, followed by support from friends, and then support from loved ones. This pattern reflects that family remains a crucial factor in supporting the psychological well-being of single mothers, while support from friends and loved ones continues to contribute, albeit to varying degrees across individuals. These findings indicate that family remains the primary source of social support for single mothers in this study. Therefore, efforts to improve the psychological well-being of single mothers should consider family involvement as an important source of support, without neglecting the role of friends and digital communities as additional sources of support.

The results of the frequency distribution analysis (Table 5) indicate that the majority of respondents are actively involved in social media-based digital communities. The highest participation rates were found on Instagram (50.0%) and Facebook (41.7%), while the level of respondent engagement on WhatsApp (2.8%) and X/Twitter (5.6%) was relatively lower. This pattern indicates that the digital activities of single mothers in this study were more focused on Instagram and Facebook than on other platforms. This finding indicates that these two platforms are the media most used by respondents to participate in digital communities.

Table 5. Frequency distribution by community

| Community   | Counts | % of Table | Cumulative% |
|-------------|--------|------------|-------------|
| WhatsApp    | 1      | 2.8%       | 2.8%        |
| Instagram   | 18     | 50.0%      | 52.8%       |
| Facebook    | 15     | 41.7%      | 94.4%       |
| X / Twitter | 2      | 5.6%       | 100.0%      |

Cumulatively, 94.4% of respondents participated in digital communities using Instagram and Facebook. The dominance of these two platforms indicates that the context of the digital communities in this study largely revolved around these two social media platforms. This finding suggests that the descriptions of social support and psychological well-being obtained in this study largely reflect the experiences of respondents participating in digital communities through Instagram and Facebook, making the characteristics of these two platforms an important context for interpreting the research results.

Conversely, the low proportion of respondents on other platforms indicates that these platforms have not been widely utilized as digital community platforms by respondents in this study. The differences in usage distribution across platforms indicate that respondents' preferences for digital community media are not evenly distributed.

Overall, these findings indicate that social media, particularly Instagram and Facebook, are the platforms most frequently used by respondents in digital communities. These results suggest that these two platforms are the primary contexts for community interaction in this study, making them important considerations in understanding respondents' experiences of social support and psychological well-being.

Table 6. Normality test results

| Item | Shapiro-Wilk | p- value |
|------|--------------|----------|
| K1   | 0.899        | 0.003    |
| K2   | 0.886        | 0.001    |
| K3   | 0.918        | 0.011    |
| K4   | 0.912        | 0.007    |
| T1   | 0.881        | 0.001    |
| T2   | 0.827        | < 0.001  |
| T3   | 0.862        | < 0.001  |
| T4   | 0.892        | 0.002    |
| S1   | 0.912        | 0.007    |
| S2   | 0.922        | 0.014    |
| S3   | 0.921        | 0.013    |
| S4   | 0.919        | 0.012    |

The results of the normality test (Table 6) using the Shapiro-Wilk method show that the p-values for all items are below the 0.05 significance threshold, ranging from <0.001 to 0.014. This condition indicates that the data are not normally distributed for all items on the social support and psychological well-being scale. These results indicate that the data distribution across all items differs significantly from normality, so the assumption of normality is not met. An abnormal data distribution does not necessarily indicate instrument weaknesses; rather, it reflects variation in responses among respondents when assessing their perceived social support. This finding indicates that respondents' responses to social support varied considerably across each dimension measured. This variation suggests that respondents' perceptions of social support are not homogeneous; therefore, research results need to be interpreted based on the distribution of the data characteristics obtained. The observed variation may reflect differences in respondents' individual experiences and circumstances in how they perceive social support and psychological well-being. Therefore, the non-normal distribution should be taken into account when selecting and interpreting subsequent statistical analyses to ensure that the findings accurately reflect the characteristics of the observed data.

### 3.2 Discussion

The results of this study indicate that Muslim single mothers who are members of digital communities receive relatively high levels of social support, particularly from family, compared to friends or significant others. These findings suggest that family still plays a crucial role as the primary source of support in dealing with the psychological and social pressures inherent in single motherhood. In the context of Muslim communities, this pressure is also related to the moral and spiritual responsibilities of carrying out the role of single parent in accordance with Islamic values. Therefore, social support is an important protective factor in helping individuals cope with stress and strengthen self-esteem, thus enabling them to better adapt to life's challenges (Raffar et al., 2021). This support encompasses not only material assistance but also emotional support, validation, and social acceptance, which play a role in maintaining psychological well-being. This aligns with the perspective of Social Support Theory, which positions social support as a resource that can help individuals cope with stress and adapt psychologically (Cohen & McKay, 2020).

In the context of Indonesian culture that upholds collectivism, the dominant role of the family as a primary support system provides a relevant context for the findings of this study. The highest average family support score indicates that the family is the most dominant source of social support among the sources of support measured in this study. These findings indicate that although single mothers are active in digital communities, family support remains an important part of their social support sources. In this context, digital communication can be understood as complementary support that complements the emotional and social support from the immediate environment. Thus, the findings of this study illustrate the existence of two complementary spaces of social support, namely the immediate interpersonal environment and the digital community, without concluding that there is a difference in contribution or influence between the two.

Although family support is the primary source, the study also showed that support from friends had a relatively high average score. This finding suggests that friendships are a source of social support available to single mothers, including through interactions within social communities. The relatively high average score for the peer support dimension suggests the existence of a space for single mothers to share experiences and gain emotional understanding. This aligns with Dansu's (2024) findings, which state that social interaction through online communities can support psychological resilience and strengthen feelings of connectedness in vulnerable groups such as single mothers. However, online social relationships can be volatile and influenced by the intensity and quality of interactions between members. In the context of this study, support from friends through digital communities can be understood as a form of social support that complements other sources of support, without concluding a direct relationship with respondents' levels of psychological well-being.

This congruence can also be understood through the perspective of Walther & Whitty's (2021) Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) Theory, which explains that digital interactions can facilitate the formation of interpersonal relationships even without face-to-face interaction. Emotional messages can be conveyed through text, images, or videos, making platforms like Instagram and Facebook a platform for single moms to connect with peers, obtain information, and share experiences with individuals facing similar situations. In the context of this research, these characteristics illustrate the function of digital communication as a space for interaction and the exchange of social support. However, the quality of digital interactions can vary between individuals and communities, depending on the level of trust, the intensity of the interaction, and the sustainability of the established relationship. Therefore, digital communication in this study is more appropriately understood as a means of providing access to social support and expanding the space for interaction for Muslim single moms, rather than as a factor that directly determines psychological well-being.

Support from a special person, such as a partner or other significant figure, showed the lowest average score, with a high degree of variation in responses. This is understandable,

as not all single moms have a partner or significant figure as a source of support. Some respondents rely on family, friends, or community for social support in their daily lives. This aligns with the findings of Van Gasse & Mortelmans (2020), who explained that many single mothers focus their energy on meeting their children's needs and stabilizing their families, making relationships with new significant figures less of a priority. This situation also emphasizes the importance of online communities as digital support systems that can fill the void of emotional support through horizontal connections between members.

However, low levels of support from significant figures do not necessarily indicate low psychological well-being among respondents, as this study did not examine the relationship between the two aspects. These findings suggest that respondents' social support comes not only from significant figures but also from family, friends, and digital communities. Thus, the existence of online communities can be understood as a social interaction space that provides access to emotional and social support for single mothers, without concluding that their existence directly replaces the function of closer and more sustainable interpersonal relationships.

Another interesting finding is the dominant use of Instagram (50%) and Facebook (41.7%) as the primary platforms for single mothers to interact and obtain social support. This aligns with research by Noviani & Wijayanti (2022), who found that the @singlemomsindonesia community account on Instagram serves as a safe space for single mothers to share experiences and validate each other's emotions. This finding is also supported by research by Kopacz (2021), who explained that the Facebook community for single mothers functions as a hidden village, a safe space that allows single mothers to share experiences, obtain emotional validation, and expand their social support networks. These findings indicate that social media is not only used as a means of communication but also as a space for community interaction, allowing individuals with similar experiences to share experiences, obtain emotional support, and build social connections.

In addition to being a means of communication, social media also functions as a digital support system that strengthens the social capital of single mothers. Based on Social Capital Theory (Son, 2020), interactions in digital spaces can generate two forms of social capital: bonding social capital, or emotional bonds between community members, and bridging social capital, or expanding social networks. In the context of this research, the active engagement of Muslim single mothers on Instagram and Facebook demonstrates the formation of bonding through the sharing of stories, moral support, and a sense of solidarity. Meanwhile, bridging is formed through interactions with the wider community, which opens up opportunities to obtain new information and resources, such as access to jobs, training, or other positive social networks.

The research findings indicate that digital communication is one of the social interaction spaces used by Muslim single moms to share experiences and obtain emotional support. However, these descriptive findings cannot be used to determine the relationship between digital communication and psychological well-being. This is because this study focused on describing the characteristics of social support, digital media use, and the psychological well-being of respondents without examining the relationships between variables. Therefore, digital communication in this study is more appropriately understood as a social context that provides a space for interaction and access to social support for Muslim single moms. Future research could examine the relationship between digital media use, social support, and psychological well-being through inferential analysis involving a larger number of respondents.

Ryff (2018) explains that psychological well-being is a multidimensional concept encompassing self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. These six dimensions demonstrate that psychological well-being encompasses various interrelated psychological and social aspects of an individual's experience. In the context of this research, digital communication can be understood as a social space that provides opportunities for Muslim single mothers to build relationships, share experiences, and obtain emotional support.

However, this study did not examine the relationship between digital communication and each dimension of psychological well-being.

These findings can be considered alongside research by Henton & Swanson (2023), which showed that online communities can provide benefits in the form of a sense of security, validation of experiences, solidarity, and a space for mothers to share experiences and obtain emotional support. These findings suggest that the benefits of online communities can emerge in the form of social and emotional experiences, and therefore need not always be understood solely through changes in psychological well-being. The results of Yang & Feng's (2024) meta-analysis also showed that social media use and subjective well-being are related and influenced by various factors, including perceived social support, self-esteem, and the quality of interactions formed on social media. Therefore, in this study, digital communication can be understood as one of the social contexts that complement the sources of support and interpersonal interactions for Muslim single mothers, while understanding its relationship with psychological well-being requires further testing through inferential analysis.

The differences between the results of this study and several previous studies that found a positive relationship between digital communication and psychological well-being are likely influenced by the characteristics of the respondents, the research context, and the relatively limited sample size of 36 respondents. This small number of respondents may not have represented the diverse experiences of Muslim single moms in utilizing digital communication. Furthermore, the quality of interactions within digital communities, socioeconomic conditions, and other psychological factors not measured in this study also have the potential to influence respondents' psychological well-being. Therefore, the results of this study need to be interpreted with caution and cannot be generalized to the entire population of Muslim single moms. Therefore, digital communication in this study is more appropriately understood as a source of social support that can complement an individual's psychosocial needs, rather than as the primary factor directly determining psychological well-being.

In an Islamic context, the results of this study are also relevant to the values of brotherhood and mutual assistance in good deeds as explained in QS. Al-Ma'idah verse 2. Digital communication is not only a social tool but also a spiritual platform that fosters solidarity among Muslim women. Several studies, such as Aini & Lukito (2021) and Siregar et al. (2024), emphasize that da'wah activities and sharing religious content on social media can strengthen the identity of modern Muslim women while increasing inner peace. In the context of this research, the existence of a digital community based on Islamic values can provide a space for single Muslim mothers to obtain emotional support, spiritual motivation, and strengthen their identity as Muslim women. Interactions built through digital media allow members to share life experiences, provide moral reinforcement, and foster a sense of togetherness in facing various challenges as single parents. Thus, digital communication functions not only as a medium for exchanging information but can also become a space for social interaction that brings religious values into the lives of single Muslim mothers.

However, religious values in this study are not positioned as a factor that directly determines psychological well-being. Islamic values are more accurately understood as a form of religious coping that helps individuals make sense of life experiences, maintain hope, and cope with the various pressures they face. Therefore, the Islamic perspective in this study complements the function of social support obtained through family and digital communities, without ignoring the influence of other factors such as economic conditions, life experiences, and the quality of interpersonal relationships. This interpretation aligns with Muslih & Nashori (2024), who explain that social support based on Islamic values contributes to strengthening spiritual well-being and helps individuals cope more adaptively with the pressures of parenting.

The reliability test results showed a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value of 0.858, indicating good internal consistency of the instrument. Meanwhile, the normality test results indicated that the data were not normally distributed. This finding was taken into consideration in

selecting the analytical approach used in this study. Because the study focused on descriptive analysis, the characteristics of the data distribution are presented as part of the empirical picture of the respondents without being used to draw conclusions about the relationships between variables. The variation in responses found in this study indicates differences in social support and psychological well-being scores between the measured components, which can then serve as a basis for future research to examine factors that may be related to these differences.

In this study, digital communication provides a space for single mothers to obtain emotional support, information, and share experiences with individuals from similar backgrounds. These findings indicate that digital communication is a social interaction space that can complement the social support sources available to single mothers. Therefore, social media can be understood as part of the psychosocial ecosystem that provides a space for sharing experiences and expanding access to social support. While its relationship with psychological well-being still requires further testing through inferential analysis.

Furthermore, this study has several limitations that should be considered. The relatively limited number of respondents means the results cannot be generalized to the entire population of Muslim single mothers in Indonesia. Furthermore, the use of descriptive analysis provides a snapshot of the data characteristics but fails to explain the causal relationship or the extent of the influence of digital communication on psychological well-being. Therefore, further research is recommended involving a larger sample size and using inferential analysis, such as regression or structural equation modeling, to more comprehensively analyze the relationships between variables.

The findings of this study have several practical implications, particularly for digital community managers, social organizations, and institutions working to empower women and families. Although digital communication has not shown a significant relationship with psychological well-being, digital communities still have the potential to facilitate information exchange, emotional support, and strengthen social networks for Muslim single mothers. Therefore, community managers are expected to not only provide a space for sharing experiences but also develop more structured programs, such as mental health education, group counseling, parenting training, skills development, and collaboration with psychologists, counselors, and religious leaders. This approach is expected to improve the quality of interactions within the community so that the benefits of digital communication extend beyond the social aspect to support efforts to improve the psychological well-being of its members.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the study of digital communication and psychological well-being by describing the position of digital communication as one of the social contexts in the lives of Muslim single mothers. The research findings indicate that digital communication provides a space for building social networks, sharing experiences, and obtaining emotional support, while family support remains the dominant source of social support. Thus, digital communication can be understood as part of a social support ecosystem that complements support sources from the immediate interpersonal environment, particularly among Muslim single mothers.

Overall, this study shows that digital communication provides a space for Muslim single moms to build social networks, obtain emotional support, and share experiences with individuals from similar backgrounds. The existence of digital communities also provides access to information and social interactions, allowing members to gain support from those with relatively similar experiences. In this study, digital communication is more appropriately positioned as a source of complementary support that complements social support from family, friends, and other interpersonal environments. These findings demonstrate the relevance of digital communities as a social support space for Muslim single moms and provide a basis for further research to empirically test the relationship between digital communication, social support, and psychological well-being using inferential analysis.

## 4. Conclusion

Based on the research results, family support is the most dominant source of social support for Muslim single moms who are members of digital communities. This finding indicates that digital communication cannot yet be considered a direct determinant of psychological well-being. Instead, family support is the most dominant source of social support, while digital communities play a complementary role, complementing the emotional and social support received from the immediate environment. Theoretically, this study demonstrates that social support is an important part of the interpersonal environment that accompanies psychological well-being among Muslim single moms, while digital media use provides a space for social interaction that can complement this support network. Given that this study used descriptive analysis with a relatively small sample size, further research is recommended using a larger sample and applying inferential analysis to empirically test the relationship among social support, digital media use, and psychological well-being.

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## Author Contribution

A.B.A.: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Writing – Original Draft, Writing – Review & Editing; S.F.: Investigation, Data Curation, Writing – Original Draft; K.R.: Validation, Supervision, Writing – Review & Editing.

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Ethics review and approval were waived for this non-experimental study because it used anonymous survey data and posed no potential risks to participants. All procedures followed ethical principles for research involving human participants.

## Informed Consent Statement

We obtained informed consent from all subjects involved in this study.

## Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are not publicly available due to ethical and privacy considerations in accordance with the informed consent agreement with the participants.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest. The funders had no role in the study design; the collection, analysis, or interpretation of the data; the writing of the manuscript; or the decision to publish the results.

## Declaration on the Use of Generative AI

During the preparation of this work, the authors used ChatGPT to assist with language editing, sentence structure, and clarity. After using this tool, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the publication's content.

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