

## Dialectics of Islamic Jurisprudence on Music: A Systematic Literature Review

Ahmad Farid Fanani<sup>1</sup>, Teguh Iswahyudi<sup>2</sup>, Fiko Savero<sup>3</sup>, Rifat Syauqi Efendi<sup>4</sup>, Akmal Dzakwan

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup>Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

<sup>3</sup>Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

<sup>4</sup>Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

<sup>5</sup>Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt

*Corresponding Author: faridfa4155@gmail.com*

**Submission:** 10 May 2025

**Revision:** 26 May 2025

**Accepted:** 5 June 2025

### Abstract

The debate surrounding the legal status of music in Islam has persisted from the classical era to contemporary times, reflecting significant divergences among scholars. The purpose of this study is to map the perspectives of both classical and contemporary scholars regarding the legality of music, while also identifying its ongoing relevance within current socio-religious contexts. The research employed a systematic literature review using the PRISMA approach. Out of 488 articles initially identified, 25 were selected for closer examination, and ultimately 6 were chosen for in-depth qualitative analysis. The results reveal that some scholars strictly prohibit music, arguing that its potential harm outweighs its benefits, particularly because it may distract from worship and stimulate sensual desires. In contrast, other scholars argue that the textual evidence for prohibition is weak or unauthentic, and therefore the original ruling on music should be considered permissible (*mubah*).

**Keywords:** Islamic Music; Music Law; Systematic Literature Review; Jurisprudential Dialectics.

### Abstrak

Perdebatan mengenai hukum musik dalam Islam telah berlangsung sejak masa klasik hingga era kontemporer, memperlihatkan adanya perbedaan pandangan yang tajam di kalangan ulama. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memetakan pandangan ulama klasik dan kontemporer mengenai hukum musik serta mengidentifikasi relevansinya dalam konteks sosial-keagamaan saat ini. Metode yang digunakan adalah systematic literature review dengan pendekatan PRISMA. Dari total 488 artikel yang teridentifikasi, 25 artikel diseleksi lebih lanjut, dan akhirnya 6 artikel dipilih untuk dianalisis secara mendalam. Data yang diperoleh kemudian dianalisis secara kualitatif untuk menemukan pola, perbedaan, dan titik temu dalam pandangan hukum musik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sebagian ulama melarang musik dengan alasan mudarat lebih banyak daripada manfaat, terutama karena dapat melalaikan ibadah dan membangkitkan syahwat. Namun, sejumlah ulama lain menilai dalil pelarangan tidak sah, sehingga hukum asal musik adalah mubah.

**Kata Kunci:** Musik Islami; Hukum Musik; Systematic Literature Review; Dialektika Hukum

## INTRODUCTION

Music at the global level represents the dynamic ways in which humans shape aesthetic expression while simultaneously forging social bonds that unify communities. Since antiquity, music has often been understood as a reflection of cosmic order and spirituality, as illustrated by the idea of universal harmony within the concept of the “music of the spheres.”<sup>1</sup> In traditional societies, music largely functioned as a ritual and collective medium, whereas in modern Western culture it evolved into an autonomous art form through the development of notation and formal institutions. Shifts in political and social landscapes later transformed music into a vehicle of resistance and even revolution.<sup>2</sup> This phenomenon underscores that music has always been present not only as an artistic expression but also as a discourse of ideology and power.

Music in Islam began with traditions of reception, adaptation, and continuous legal debates that shaped its history. Practices such as *samāʿ* and Sufi musical traditions frequently generated controversy, yet endured as spiritual pathways drawing human beings closer to God.<sup>3</sup> The emergence of Sufism even gave rise to novel musical forms that later became the foundation for contemporary developments, as evidenced in modern Iranian music.<sup>4</sup> Interaction between Islam and local traditions also enriched the musical treasury, for instance through the influence of Indian music within interreligious devotional practices.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, tensions with orthodoxy persisted, reflected in resistance toward musical symbols within the heritage of Islamic art.<sup>6</sup>

The trajectory of music in the Islamic world then intertwined with the broader dynamics of global modernity. During the late Ottoman caliphate, modernist thought brought forth a redefined understanding of music as an instrument of cultural reform, while methodological debates about the legitimacy of music in Islamic law continued unabated.<sup>7</sup> On the international stage, music expanded as a medium of identity and simultaneously a political arena negotiating traditional values with modernity through innovation in production and distribution.<sup>8</sup> These transformations highlight that Islam cannot be isolated from the currents of modernity but instead remains in constant dialogue with cross-cultural dynamics in the age of globalization.

Contemporary Islamic music reflects the culmination of these historical and intercultural processes. Sufi music continues to play a central role as both a mystical medium and a communal

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<sup>1</sup> Dunja Rašić, “Music of the Spheres in Akbarian Sufism,” *Religions* 13, no. 10 (October 3, 2022): 928, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13100928>.

<sup>2</sup> Sharifah Faizah Syed Mohammed, “The Role of Music in the Revolution,” in *Musical Nationalism in Indonesia* (Singapore: Springer Singapore, 2021), 167–82, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-33-6950-4\\_13](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-33-6950-4_13).

<sup>3</sup> Omar Farahat, “Norms and Values in Islamic Legal Reasoning: The Case of Listening to Music (Samāʿ),” *Religions* 14, no. 6 (June 13, 2023): 780, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14060780>.

<sup>4</sup> Sayyed Ali Asghar Mirbagheri Fard and Ehsan Reisi, “The Role of Sufism in the Formation of Contemporary Iranian Music,” *Religions* 14, no. 12 (November 29, 2023): 1483, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14121483>.

<sup>5</sup> Guy L. Beck, “Shared Religious Soundscapes: Indian Rāga Music in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Devotion in South Asia,” *Religions* 14, no. 11 (November 10, 2023): 1406, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14111406>.

<sup>6</sup> Pooyan Tamimi Arab, “Islamic Heritage versus Orthodoxy: Figural Painting, Musical Instruments and Wine Bowls at the Dutch National Museum of World Cultures,” *Journal of Material Culture* 26, no. 2 (June 5, 2021): 178–200, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1359183521997503>.

<sup>7</sup> G.B. Shamilli, “Musicking and Islamic Law as a Problem of Methodology,” *Art & Culture Studies*, no. 3 (October 2021): 256–83, <https://doi.org/10.51678/2226-0072-2021-3-256-283>; Olley, “An Orient of One’s Own: Music and Islamic Modernism in the Late Ottoman Empire.”

<sup>8</sup> Mohammed, “The Role of Music in the Revolution.”

practic.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the experience of listening to Qur'anic recitation is often perceived as a form of musical expression that provides therapeutic and recreational benefits, as observed in Egypt.<sup>10</sup> Legal discourse still persists, since certain normative perspectives argue that music can lead to negligence in worship.<sup>11</sup> Yet, within wider social life, music increasingly functions as a medium of identity and self-expression among Muslims in diverse region.<sup>12</sup> Thus, contemporary Islamic musical practices cannot be separated from ongoing debates, historical legacies, and global interactions that shape their existence.

Jurisprudential perspectives on music in Islam are rooted in interpretations of Qur'anic verses and Prophetic traditions that address forms of entertainment during the early Islamic period. Some scholars interpret prohibitions in these texts as preventive measures against immorality, particularly because music in the pre-Islamic *jahiliyyah* era was often associated with drunken festivities and rituals that diverted people from worship.<sup>13</sup> However, diverse exegetical traditions have produced different understandings. Certain scholars argue that prohibitions apply only to the misuse of music, not to music itself.<sup>14</sup> This background has created space for diverse legal opinions, situating music in varying positions within the framework of *fiqh*.

The majority of classical scholars who adopted strict positions relied on *hadiths* linking music to negligence and frivolous behavior. Ibn Hajar al-Haytamī even authored a dedicated treatise rejecting entertainment, deeming it corruptive of morality and weakening of religious seriousness.<sup>15</sup> This approach reinforced the view that music could arouse sensual desires and promote immoral behavior, thereby justifying its prohibition in many circumstances.<sup>16</sup> Socially, music was also considered an entry point for foreign cultural influences that might weaken Islamic creed (*'aqidah*).<sup>17</sup> Hence, moral concerns and the protection of the community became strong foundations for scholars who declared music forbidden.

Conversely, a number of modern scholars argue that music is not automatically haram as long as it does not conflict with the principles of sharia. Music may even serve as an instrument of

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<sup>9</sup> Mirbagheri Fard and Reisi, "The Role of Sufism in the Formation of Contemporary Iranian Music"; Rašić, "Music of the Spheres in Akbarian Sufism."

<sup>10</sup> Mohamed Hossam Ismail, "Experiences of Listening to the Qur'an in Egypt: A Qualitative Phenomenological Study of Therapeutic and Recreational Listening," *Contemporary Islam* 17, no. 1 (April 25, 2023): 109–31, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-023-00513-0>.

<sup>11</sup> Farahat, "Norms and Values in Islamic Legal Reasoning: The Case of Listening to Music (Samā')." "

<sup>12</sup> Mark Levine and Jonas Otterbeck, "Music in Muslim Contexts," in *Handbook of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Lives* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021), 781–95, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-32626-5\\_42](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-32626-5_42).

<sup>13</sup> Unyil Unyil, "TEXTUAL ANALYSIS BETWEEN HALAL AND HARAM ISLAMIC MUSIC BASED ON THE QURAN AND HADITH," *Kawalu: Journal of Local Culture* 10, no. 01 (August 10, 2023): 190–215, <https://doi.org/10.32678/kwl.v10i01.7872>; Muthoifin Muthoifin et al., "Sharia Views on Music and Songs: Perspective Study of Muhammadiyah and Madzhab Four," *Demak Universal Journal of Islam and Sharia* 1, no. 01 (February 1, 2023): 10–17, <https://doi.org/10.61455/deujis.v1i01.6>.

<sup>14</sup> Hanameyra Pratiwi, "Analisis Sanad Dan Matan Hadis Tentang Musik," *Jurnal Riset Agama* 1, no. 1 (September 24, 2021): 59–70, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jra.v1i1.14256>.

<sup>15</sup> Fitzroy Morrissey, "The Status of Music in Islamic Law: Ibn Hajar Al-Haytamī's (d. 974/1567) Treatise Against Recreation in Its Polemical Context," *Islamic Law and Society* 31, no. 3 (March 6, 2024): 194–234, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685195-bja10053>.

<sup>16</sup> Mussa Ame Mussa, "Critical Analysis of Music Prohibition and Permission in Islam," *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology* 16, no. 2 (2024): 9–22.

<sup>17</sup> Muthoifin et al., "Sharia Views on Music and Songs: Perspective Study of Muhammadiyah and Madzhab Four."

education, *da'wah*, and emotional therapy that brings individuals closer to God<sup>18</sup>. Contemporary studies further indicate that many young Muslims experience confusion regarding the halal–haram dichotomy, yet in practice they tend to accept music as long as its content is positive.<sup>19</sup> This position resonates with the thought of al-Ghazali, who viewed music as a potential spiritual medium provided that it does not distract from obligatory worship.<sup>20</sup> Thus, a paradigm shift has emerged that situates music as a contextual phenomenon, rather than a rigidly defined black-and-white issue in Islamic law.

The contemporary situation increasingly reveals the complexity of discourses on music in the Islamic world. Today, music appears not merely as entertainment but also as a tool for *da'wah*, education, and cultural expression.<sup>21</sup> Recent scholarship emphasizes the ongoing tension between traditionalist views, which tend toward prohibition, and modern perspectives, which allow conditional acceptance.<sup>22</sup> Young generations, growing up with broad access to global music, attempt to maintain Islamic identity while negotiating the realities of modern life.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, legal discourse on music in this era is no longer confined to the halal–haram debate but also engages with how Islam reinterprets the position of music when facing the challenges of modernity and globalization.<sup>24</sup>

Islamic legal scholarship has often focused on family matters, such as lineage determination and the status of illegitimate children under Malaysia's Islamic Family Law Act.<sup>25</sup> Other studies address mechanisms of *fasakh* and *khulu'* within Indonesia's Compilation of Islamic Law.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, Islamic law has been widely applied to modern *mu'amalah* issues, including Qur'an-based marketing strategies and producer behavior in Islamic principles of production.<sup>27</sup> At the same time,

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<sup>18</sup> Subhi Ibrahim Sharqawi, "Importance and Ways to Employ Music and Singing from the Islamic Law Standpoint," *Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences (PJLSS)* 22, no. 2 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.57239/PJLSS-2024-22.2.001573>; Suud Sarim Karimullah, "The Use of Music in Islamic Da'wah and Its Impact on Audience Emotional Response," *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 44, no. 2 (December 31, 2024): 217–36, <https://doi.org/10.21580/jid.v44.2.20293>.

<sup>19</sup> Abul Hassan, Ali Ab Ul Hassan, and Rabia Noor, "Permissibility Of Music In Islam: A Confused State Of Halal And Haram Among Pakistani Youth," *Journal of Positive School Psychology* 6, no. 10 (2022).

<sup>20</sup> - Krisnawati, Yudi Sukmayadi, and Hery Supiarza, "Music Activities in Islamic Boarding Schools," in *Proceedings of the International Conference on Arts and Design Education (ICADE 2018)* (Paris, France: Atlantis Press, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.2991/icade-18.2019.70>.

<sup>21</sup> Karimullah, "The Use of Music in Islamic Da'wah and Its Impact on Audience Emotional Response."

<sup>22</sup> Mussa, "Critical Analysis of Music Prohibition and Permission in Islam."

<sup>23</sup> Hassan, Hassan, and Noor, "Permissibility Of Music In Islam: A Confused State Of Halal And Haram Among Pakistani Youth."

<sup>24</sup> Unyil, "TEXTUAL ANALYSIS BETWEEN HALAL AND HARAM ISLAMIC MUSIC BASED ON THE QURAN AND HADITH."

<sup>25</sup> Noor 'Ashikin Hamid and Noraida Harun, "Legitimasi: Kaedah Penentuan Nasab Dan Hak Anak Tidak Sah Taraf Menurut Undang-Undang Keluarga Islam Malaysia," *Kanun Jurnal Undang-Undang Malaysia* 37, no. 1 (January 28, 2025): 97–120, [https://doi.org/10.37052/kanun.37\(1\)no5](https://doi.org/10.37052/kanun.37(1)no5).

<sup>26</sup> Deris Arista Saputra, "A STUDY OF FASAKH AND KHULU IN THE COMPILATION OF ISLAMIC LAW (KHI): COMPARISON, CAUSES, AND IMPLICATIONS," *International Journal of Social Service and Research* 5, no. 1 (January 28, 2025): 136–43, <https://doi.org/10.46799/ijssr.v5i1.1191>.

<sup>27</sup> Ziadatun Kholishoh, "ANALYSIS OF PRODUCER BEHAVIOR CV. BLJ ACCORDING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF PRODUCTION IN ISLAM," *Pedagogic Research-Applied Literacy Journal* 2, no. 1 (January 27, 2025): 328–35, <https://doi.org/10.70574/kgkf6c42>; Andi Amri Mansur, Ahmad Mujahid, and Muhsin Mahfudz, "Strategi Pemasaran Barang Dan Jasa Dalam Islam (Perspektif Al-Qur'an)," *JUMABI: Jurnal Manajemen, Akuntansi Dan Bisnis* 3, no. 1 (January 28, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.56314/jumabi.v3i1.283>.

the systematic literature review (SLR) method has been increasingly used in fields like education and management, such as the role of school principals in strengthening STEM education, the integration of TPACK in mathematics learning, and leadership development in African education systems.<sup>28</sup> Music-related studies have also appeared in health contexts, such as interventions for ICU survivors.<sup>29</sup> From these examples, it is evident that Islamic law research and music studies largely remain separate trajectories, and that the SLR methodology is more commonly applied to education and health rather than Islamic jurisprudence.

Other scholars have highlighted Islam in relation to broader social and cultural transformations. For instance, research has examined the role of *madrasah* teachers in professional development grounded in Islamic values.<sup>30</sup> Another study explores how Muslim women act as digital content creators, shaping Islamic communication values.<sup>31</sup> From a regulatory perspective, there are studies on political-legal transformations aimed at strengthening cyber law regulations in Indonesia.<sup>32</sup> However, whether in family law, *mu'āmalah*, education, or regulation, most Islamic law research continues to emphasize normative-practical areas without addressing art and culture, particularly music, within the framework of Islamic law. Similarly, music research remains limited to health and psychosocial interventions, without engaging with the normative dimension of sharia. Consequently, there is a noticeable research gap, as no prior work has directly addressed the issue of music law in Islam through the systematic literature review method.

The urgency of employing the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) in this study lies in its capacity to provide a comprehensive, transparent, and evidence-based knowledge map. Through SLR, this research systematically gathers, analyzes, and synthesizes scholarly findings on classical juristic perspectives, Qur'anic and Hadith references, as well as contemporary views concerning music in Islam. The aim is not only to describe divergent positions but also to identify trends, commonalities, and research gaps. The study therefore seeks to offer a structured and measurable conceptual map, assisting scholars, academics, and practitioners of Islamic law in understanding the evolution of discourse on music from the classical to the modern era. In this way, the research moves beyond mere description toward both analysis and synthesis, resulting in a holistic portrayal of music's legal status in Islam based on the available literature.

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<sup>28</sup> Omotayo Adewale Awodiji and Suraiya Rathankoomar Naicker, "Basic School Leaders' Continuous Professional Development for the 4IR: A Systematic Literature Review across Africa," *Athens Journal of Education* 12, no. 1 (January 27, 2025): 99–120, <https://doi.org/10.30958/aje.12-1-6>; Sariati Talib et al., "Empowering STEM Education through the Role of Principals: A Systematic Literature Review," *Journal of Education and Learning (EduLearn)* 19, no. 1 (February 2, 2025): 570–78, <https://doi.org/10.11591/edulearn.v19i1.21889>; Umi Hanifah, I Ketut Budayasa, and Raden Sulaiman, "Technology, Pedagogy, and Content Knowledge in Mathematics Education: A Systematic Literature Review," *Journal of Education and Learning (EduLearn)* 19, no. 1 (February 2, 2025): 579–86, <https://doi.org/10.11591/edulearn.v19i1.21816>.

<sup>29</sup> Shaista Meghani et al., "Music-Based Interventions and Theoretical Mechanisms in Post-ICU Survivors: A Critical Narrative Synthesis," *Intensive and Critical Care Nursing* 86 (February 2025): 103777, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iccn.2024.103777>.

<sup>30</sup> Syahraini Tambak and Desi Sukenti, "Islamic Professional Madrasa Teachers and Motivation for Continuous Development: A Phenomenological Approach," *Journal of Education and Learning (EduLearn)* 19, no. 1 (February 2, 2025): 81–90, <https://doi.org/10.11591/edulearn.v19i1.21301>.

<sup>31</sup> Elvi Sumanti and Abdullah Abdullah, "The Role of Muslim Women as Content Creators: Building Islamic Communication Values," *International Journal Of Education, Social Studies, And Management (IJESSM)* 5, no. 1 (January 27, 2025): 170–84, <https://doi.org/10.52121/ijessm.v5i1.631>.

<sup>32</sup> Muhenni Sihotang and Zainal Arifin Hoessein, "Transformasi Politik Hukum Dalam Penguatan Regulasi Cyber Law Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Syntax Admiration* 6, no. 1 (January 27, 2025): 586–96, <https://doi.org/10.46799/jsa.v6i1.2070>.

The contribution of this research lies in filling the academic void regarding the study of music law in Islam, an area that has received little attention through the SLR methodology. Theoretically, this study enriches Islamic legal scholarship, particularly in the domain of art and culture, which has been relatively neglected. Methodologically, it demonstrates the application of SLR in Islamic law studies, offering a model for future inquiries. On a practical level, this research may serve as a reference for Islamic educational institutions, policymakers, and broader Muslim communities in navigating music's place within the framework of sharia. By bridging classical traditions, contemporary contexts, and the latest academic findings, this study aims to provide a balanced, evidence-based perspective, while fostering broader scholarly dialogue on the legal discourse of music in Islam.

## METHOD

This study employed the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, guided primarily by the PRISMA 2020 framework as its methodological reference. The SLR method was chosen because it enables the presentation of a literature review that is not only comprehensive but also transparent, structured, and replicable. PRISMA 2020 itself represents an advancement from earlier guidelines, offering a clearer and more detailed pathway for the selection of literature, beginning from the identification stage to final inclusion. Such a process ensures that each step can be carefully traced and verified.<sup>33</sup> The strength of this method lies in its ability to minimize potential bias while simultaneously reinforcing the validity of findings, particularly when addressing sensitive topics such as the legal rulings on music in Islam. The process of article selection in this study is visually illustrated in the PRISMA flow diagram, which is presented in Table 1. .

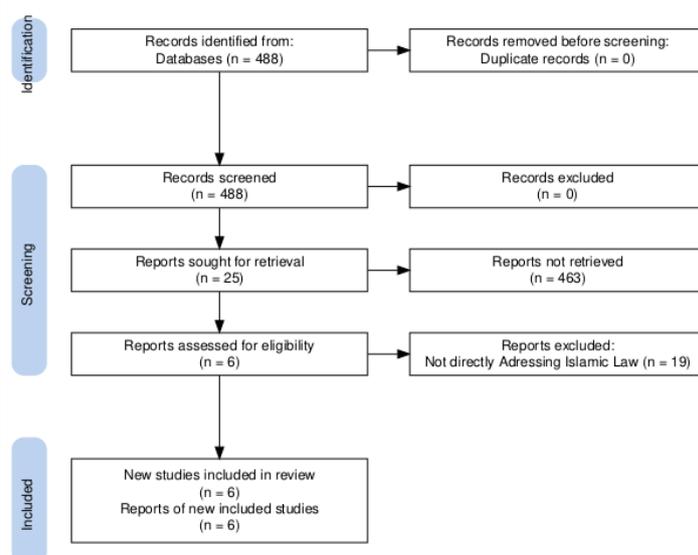
The initial stage began with the identification of articles through the Scopus database, using the keywords "Islam" AND "Music" within the publication period of 1994–2025. This search resulted in 488 articles that matched the selected keywords. These articles were subsequently filtered in the screening phase, during which relevance to the central research question namely, how Islamic jurisprudence views the status of music served as the primary criterion. At this stage, the number of articles was narrowed down to 25, which addressed the connection between Islam and music, although most of them primarily examined cultural, educational, or social dimensions rather than legal ones. Consequently, the next stage involved a more stringent selection process based on alignment with the research criteria.

Following this refined screening, the total number of articles was reduced to six studies that explicitly and directly addressed the jurisprudential status of music from an Islamic perspective. These selected works consisted of one article published in 2023, one in 2021, one in 2019, two in 2016, and one in 2015. These six articles were subsequently included in the final analysis stage (included) for in-depth examination. This layered selection process clearly demonstrates how PRISMA 2020 serves as a systematic guide to ensure that only highly relevant and methodologically sound studies are retained. As a result, the findings of this research rest on a foundation that is strong, systematic, and academically accountable.

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<sup>33</sup> Neal R. Haddaway et al., "PRISMA2020 : An R Package and Shiny App for Producing PRISMA 2020-compliant Flow Diagrams, with Interactivity for Optimised Digital Transparency and Open Synthesis," *Campbell Systematic Reviews* 18, no. 2 (June 27, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1230>.

Table 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram for Article Screening and Inclusion



## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Identification of Articles on the Legal Status of Music in Islam

From the literature screening process conducted through the PRISMA method, six articles were identified as suitable for further in-depth analysis. These articles were evenly divided, with three asserting that music can be accepted within Islam, while the other three emphasized that music is incompatible with the principles of sharia. This balanced distribution highlights the strong intellectual dynamics at play within the contemporary discourse of Islamic jurisprudence on music. The detailed results of the selection can be found in Table 2, which provides the year of publication, author(s), and article titles. Collectively, these six studies offer a valuable foundation for understanding the diversity of perspectives regarding Islamic legal rulings on music.

One of the articles supporting the permissibility of music emphasizes its role as a spiritual medium and a means of strengthening religious identity. This perspective argues that music is not inherently contradictory to sharia; rather, its legal status depends on the context of its use.<sup>34</sup> Music performed with positive intent and devoid of inappropriate lyrics may serve as a medium for achieving inner tranquility. Such an understanding creates room for cultural accommodation and demonstrates Islam's flexibility in engaging with artistic expressions within Muslim societies.

Another article that supports the permissibility of music highlights its function within religious practices that are deeply integrated with local traditions. According to this analysis, musical elements can actually enhance the solemnity of worship and deepen spiritual experiences.<sup>35</sup> From this perspective, music is seen not as mere entertainment but as an integral component of religious expression. Therefore, music is regarded as lawful so long as it supports the aims of worship and does not contravene Islamic values. This argument underscores the ability of Islam to embrace cultural elements while preserving the essence of its teachings.

A third article advocating the permissibility of music focuses on the interaction between sharia and popular culture. Within this framework, music is interpreted as a site of negotiation

<sup>34</sup> Fatih ORHAN, "Gınâdan Semâ'ya: Fakihlerin Tasavvuf Mûsikisine Bakışı," *Hitit İlahiyat Dergisi* 20, no. 2 (December 30, 2021): 805–34, <https://doi.org/10.14395/hid.979226>.

<sup>35</sup> Tsonka Al Bakri, Mohammed Mallah, and Nedat Nuserat, "Al Adhan : Documenting Historical Background, Practice Rules, and Musicological Features of the Muslim Call for Prayer in Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan," *Musicologica Brunensia*, no. 1 (2019): 167–85, <https://doi.org/10.5817/MB2019-1-12>.

between religious norms and ongoing social change.<sup>36</sup> As long as the fundamental principles of Islam remain safeguarded, artistic expression can be accepted as part of the adaptive process to modernity. This argument illustrates that Islamic law is contextual and capable of evolving with time, rather than being rigid when faced with social phenomena.

Conversely, one of the articles opposing music approaches the issue through political and theological lenses. Music is portrayed as dangerous because it is believed to undermine communal morality.<sup>37</sup> Referring to cases of music prohibition under certain Islamic regimes, the study argues that music represents a threat to the purity of religious teachings. This perspective underscores the necessity of a protective stance within Islamic law to shield society from the negative influences attributed to music.

Another study rejecting music examines the phenomenon of street music in a Muslim-majority country. The study interprets music as a form of cultural resistance that potentially erodes moral order.<sup>38</sup> In this framework, music is not only seen as contrary to Islamic teachings but also as a symbol of social decadence. From the standpoint of Islamic law, music in this context is judged impermissible because it is perceived to cause more harm than benefit. Such reasoning reflects a firmly conservative attitude aimed at preserving Islamic values.

The final study that upholds the prohibition of music discusses the infiltration of popular culture into Muslim communities. Popular music is perceived as carrying foreign values that threaten to erode Islamic identity.<sup>39</sup> From this perspective, music is not simply entertainment but rather a conduit for external cultural penetration deemed incompatible with sharia. Consequently, Islamic law is considered to require the prohibition of music that conflicts with religious norms. This position reinforces the idea of safeguarding Muslim communities from the potentially corrosive effects of globalization on moral values.

Table 2. List of Articles Relevant to the Research Question

No	Year	Authors	Title
1	2023	Bertolini Manuel	La censura musicale in Afghanistan (1996-2023): politica, teologia, etica
2	2021	Orhan Fatih	Gınâdan Semâ'ya: Fakihlerin Tasavvuf Mûsikisine Bakışı
3	2019	Al Bakri T.; Mallah M.; Nuserat N.	Al Adhan: Documenting historical background, practice rules, and musicological features of the Muslim call for prayer in Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
4	2016	Breyley G.J.	Between the Cracks: Street Music in Iran
5	2016	Erol A.	The glocality of Islamic popular music: The Turkish case

<sup>36</sup> Dominik M. Müller, "ISLAMIC POLITICS AND POPULAR CULTURE IN MALAYSIA: Negotiating Normative Change between Shariah Law and Electric Guitars," *Indonesia and the Malay World* 43, no. 127 (September 2, 2015): 318–44, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13639811.2014.930993>.

<sup>37</sup> Manuel Bertolini, "La Censura Musicale in Afghanistan (1996-2023): Politica, Teologia, Etica," *SOCIETÀ E STORIA*, no. 2023/181 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.3280/SS2023-181011>.

<sup>38</sup> G. J. Breyley, "Between the Cracks: Street Music in Iran," *Journal of Musicological Research* 35, no. 2 (April 2, 2016): 72–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01411896.2016.1165051>.

<sup>39</sup> Ayhan Erol, "The Glocality of Islamic Popular Music: The Turkish Case," in *Made in Turkey* (Routledge, 2017), 107–18, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315764993>.

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6	2015	Müller Dominik.M.	Islamic Politics And Popular Culture In Malaysia: Negotiating normative change between shariah law and electric guitars: Commendation 2014 Young Scholars Competition
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### Sharia Legitimacy: Reading the Permissibility of Music in Islam

Music in Islam has long been a theme that generates ongoing dialectics between religious texts and social practices. From the earliest periods, sound and melody were incorporated into worship, as exemplified in the adhan, which is imbued with strong musical elements. A musicological study of the adhan in Jordan demonstrates the diversity of melodic styles, all of which are considered valid as long as they communicate the central message the call to prayer. This illustrates that musicality is not rejected but instead enhances the spiritual dimension of worship.<sup>40</sup> Within Sufism, *samāʿ* functions as a medium for dhikr and spiritual reflection. Some jurists view it as permissible since it strengthens closeness to God, though others caution that it can be distracting. Nevertheless, in its mystical context, music is affirmed as an act of worship when directed toward *tazkiyat al-nafs*, or purification of the soul.<sup>41</sup>

In the sphere of popular culture, music becomes an arena of negotiation between sharia principles and artistic expression. A study on Islamic politics and popular culture in Malaysia reveals how electric guitars and modern musical forms are negotiated within the boundaries of religious norms. The outcome suggests that music continues to thrive provided it does not transgress sharia boundaries such as pornography, violence, or immoral behavior.<sup>42</sup> A similar dynamic is evident in Indonesia through Nahdlatul Ulama's acceptance of religious music. Practices such as *shalawat*, *qasidah*, and *nasheed* are embraced as tools of da'wah and as means of reinforcing Islamic identity.<sup>43</sup> The transformation of music from Sufi traditions into contemporary religious pop further illustrates how art is adapted to remain relevant with changing times while still maintaining Islamic values.<sup>44</sup>

Contemporary jurists emphasize that music is permissible when certain criteria are fulfilled. Musical instruments in themselves are not inherently forbidden; rather, it is the content and intended purpose that determine legality. Fatwas on singing, nasheed, and entertainment commonly state that music with positive themes, performed in moderation, is acceptable, while music associated with sensuality or that distracts from worship must be avoided.<sup>45</sup> Hadith scholarship also reveals diverse interpretations: Ibn Hazm argued that the evidences used to prohibit music are weak, thereby legitimizing its practice, whereas other scholars such as al-

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<sup>40</sup> Al Bakri, Mallah, and Nuserat, "Al Adhan : Documenting Historical Background, Practice Rules, and Musicological Features of the Muslim Call for Prayer in Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan."

<sup>41</sup> Alberto Fabio Ambrosio, "Rumi and the Whirling Dervishes" (Adelaide (AUS): ATF Press CN - PN, 2019), <https://digital.casalini.it/9781925612288>.

<sup>42</sup> Müller, "ISLAMIC POLITICS AND POPULAR CULTURE IN MALAYSIA: Negotiating Normative Change between Shariah Law and Electric Guitars."

<sup>43</sup> Agung Teguh Prianto, "Dakwah Melalui Syi'ir: Alternatif Metode Dakwah Pada Masyarakat Urban," *INTELEKSIA: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Dakwah* 5, no. 2 (December 30, 2023): 399–418, <https://doi.org/10.55372/inteleksiajpid.v5i2.283>.

<sup>44</sup> Sonia Gains-Krishnan, "Qawwali Routes: Notes on a Sufi Music's Transformation in Diaspora," *Religions* 11, no. 12 (December 21, 2020): 685, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11120685>.

<sup>45</sup> ORHAN, "Ginâdan Semâ'ya: Fakihlerin Tasavvuf Mûsikisine Bakışı."

Mubarakfuri interpret them more restrictively.<sup>46</sup> This divergence highlights the breadth of interpretive space available in determining the legal status of music.

The permissibility of music, therefore, is determined more by its content, intention, and impact rather than by the instruments used. Within acts of worship, music strengthens devotion; within Sufism, it becomes a vehicle of dhikr; and within popular culture, it is tolerated as a medium of expression provided moral boundaries are upheld.<sup>47</sup> This perspective aligns with the framework of moderate fiqh, which evaluates rulings based on *maslahah* the benefits derived and the potential harms avoided. Accordingly, music is deemed permissible insofar as it brings good to individuals and society.

Beyond worship and entertainment, music is also understood as a social medium that fosters *ukhūmah* (brotherhood). Research on religious music shows that *shalawat* concerts and nasheed festivals function not merely as entertainment but as vehicles for strengthening collective religious identity.<sup>48</sup> This demonstrates that permissible music can play an important role in shaping public morality and social solidarity. Thus, music, when properly directed, is not only neutral but may also be considered an act of piety.

Classical debates on music have also undergone transformation in modern contexts, particularly in health and therapy. Studies indicate that music is now employed in treatment as a form of relaxation therapy or medical rehabilitation.<sup>49</sup> Contemporary fiqh perspectives accept such practices as permissible, since they align with the sharia principle of preserving health and preventing harm. This view extends the scope of permissibility beyond worship and entertainment to encompass healthcare and well-being.

Historical studies further reveal that Muslims have long coexisted with music. From *samāʿ* in Sufi practice, *qasidah* in Arab traditions, to gamelan within Javanese culture that was Islamized, music has consistently been adapted within a sharia framework.<sup>50</sup> This shows that the permissibility of music is not a fixed issue but rather a product of dynamic interaction between religious teachings and cultural contexts. Accordingly, music in Islam may be viewed as a medium of daʿwah and acculturation that demonstrates considerable flexibility.

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<sup>46</sup> Naamuddin Naamuddin, Husnel Anwar Matondang, and Fadhilah Is, "Hadist-Hadist Tentang Musik Studi Komparatif Pemahaman Ibnu Hazm Dan Al-Mubarakfuri," *ANWARUL* 4, no. 1 (January 8, 2024): 272–84, <https://doi.org/10.58578/anwarul.v4i1.2489>.

<sup>47</sup> Fikri Surya Pratama, "DARI SUFISTIK KE POP RELIGI: SEJARAH TRANSFORMASI MUSIK DALAM PERADABAN ISLAM," *Al-Tsaqafa: Jurnal Ilmiah Peradaban Islam* 20, no. 1 (July 17, 2023): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.15575/al-tsaqafa.v20i1.22969>; Abdullah Hanif, Encep Syarifudin, and Ali Muhtarom, "INTEGRATION OF RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE DIGITAL ERA," *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 14, no. 01 (2025): 49–66, <https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v14i01.7767>; Guzel Sayfullina, "Traditions of Sufi Dhikr in the Musical-Poetical Culture of Tatar Muslims," *Musicologist* 3, no. 2 (December 31, 2019): 126–45, <https://doi.org/10.33906/musicologist.635939>.

<sup>48</sup> Erna Wati, "MUSICAL PIETY: REPRESENTATION OF ISLAM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA'S NASYID BOY-BAND MUSIC," *Journal of Culture, Arts, Literature, and Linguistics (CaLLs)* 1, no. 1 (February 24, 2017): 19, <https://doi.org/10.30872/calls.v1i1.706>.

<sup>49</sup> Ruoting Liang and Lujia Qian, "The Application and Advantages of Music Therapy in the Rehabilitation of the Elderly," *MedScien* 1, no. 10 (December 31, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.61173/vq9ymv67>.

<sup>50</sup> Saidah Haris Harith, Ganesan Shanmugavelu, and Hanizah Abdul Bahar, "MUSICOLOGY IN ISLAM: A PRELIMINARY STUDY," *EPRA International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research (IJMR)*, December 21, 2020, 206–13, <https://doi.org/10.36713/epra5917>.

Synthesizing these findings underscores three primary conditions for the permissibility of music. First, its lyrics and content must align with Islamic values. Second, the context of its use must not distract from obligatory acts of worship. Third, its impact should be positive both for individuals and society. These three conditions are widely recognized across scholarly traditions, from classical jurists to contemporary academics, even though specific interpretations differ. This general principle reflects an implicit consensus that permissible music is that which educates, soothes, and reinforces faith.

Taken together, the discussion demonstrates that permissible music in Islam is a flexible and contextual concept. From the adhan to medical therapy, from *samāʿ* to popular music, permissibility is determined by purpose, content, and effect, not by the instrument itself. Differences among scholars highlight the breadth of *ijtihād* and the dynamic nature of Islamic culture. Therefore, music can be considered permissible as long as it generates benefit (*maslahah*), strengthens spirituality, and upholds moral values. This understanding is relevant for bridging classical debates with the realities of contemporary Muslim life.

### Sharia Legitimacy: Reviewing the Prohibition of Music in Islam

Discourses on the prohibition of music within Islamic traditions often stem from the conviction that music poses a threat to both the moral and spiritual well-being of society. In contexts of religious politics, music has frequently been banned outright, with the claim that it leads people into negligence toward worship. In Afghanistan, for example, music has been regarded as a danger to the sanctity of society, leading to strict restrictions on all its forms whether in public or private spaces.<sup>51</sup> Such prohibitions draw not only on religious texts but also function as instruments of social and political control, reinforcing the perception that music is hazardous to faith and communal order.

A similar phenomenon is observed in Iran, where street music is treated as a deviant activity. Conservative rulers and religious scholars label it as a source of *fitnah* that provokes immoral behavior. Although street music continues to appear in various cities, it is framed as a practice carrying significant risks to public morality.<sup>52</sup> This illustrates the persistence of strict attitudes that view music as a gateway to sin, reinforcing its prohibition at both legal and cultural levels.

In Turkey, popular Islamic music that has emerged within entertainment formats has also been subjected to stigma of prohibition. The infusion of modern entertainment values is considered to undermine the simplicity that Islam seeks to uphold. Critics highlight the lifestyle and hedonistic atmosphere accompanying such music, demonstrating how prohibition is often linked to worldly indulgences that distract believers from spiritual goals. Consequently, even music labeled as Islamic is still viewed as dangerous due to its entertainment aspects.<sup>53</sup>

From the standpoint of religious scholarship, many jurists emphasize that music is forbidden because it is believed to create opportunities for sin. The textual evidences frequently cited underline the risks of music in arousing desire, fostering negligence, and diminishing seriousness in worship. Hadiths invoked in support of prohibition provided the basis for classical scholars to warn Muslims against engaging in any form of music. To them, music was not simply entertainment but a path leading toward actions prohibited by religion.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Bertolini, "La Censura Musicale in Afghanistan (1996-2023): Politica, Teologia, Etica."

<sup>52</sup> Breyley, "Between the Cracks: Street Music in Iran."

<sup>53</sup> Erol, "The Locality of Islamic Popular Music: The Turkish Case."

<sup>54</sup> Morrissey, "The Status of Music in Islamic Law: Ibn Ḥajar Al-Haytamī's (d. 974/1567) Treatise Against Recreation in Its Polemical Context."

The prohibition of music is further reinforced by concerns regarding its social consequences. Music is perceived to contribute to the moral degradation of youth, encourage promiscuity, and nurture negligence of religious obligations. Several studies conclude that music is forbidden because its harm outweighs its benefit, as it distracts from worship, stimulates sensuality, and often carries messages or practices that contradict sharia.<sup>55</sup>

Beyond textual concerns, music is also prohibited because of its psychological effects. It is believed to unsettle emotions, weaken self-control, and foster immoral behavior. Scholars of the Shafi'i school, for instance, issued stern warnings that listening to music may drive believers into dangerous negligence. This perspective reflects the consistent view that music is not a neutral medium but one prone to leading people into sin.<sup>56</sup>

Contemporary literature further shows that despite societal changes, arguments for the prohibition of music continue to be maintained. The rapid evolution of modern music with its diverse forms has, in fact, intensified the reasons for prohibition, since global music often promotes lifestyles increasingly detached from Islamic ethics. With the rise of globalized music saturated with liberal values, its prohibition is seen as even more evident, given its observable negative influence on social behavior and disregard for religious values.<sup>57</sup>

Altogether, these perspectives affirm that in many strands of Islamic tradition, music is consistently treated as prohibited. The basis for prohibition rests on its potential for negligence, its negative moral influence, and the social corruption it is believed to produce. From politics to culture, from classical texts to contemporary analysis, music is persistently framed as a source of harm. Consequently, its prohibition emerges as a consistent conclusion reinforced across multiple scholarly and social contexts within Islam.

## CONCLUSION

This study underscores that although debates on music in Islam have persisted for centuries, the arguments rejecting its prohibition rest on stronger foundations. A significant number of scholars, including Ibn Hazm, maintain that the evidences commonly cited to forbid music are weak or inauthentic, and therefore cannot serve as binding legal proof. Consequently, the default ruling on music remains *mubah* (permissible), provided that it is not accompanied by elements explicitly forbidden by sharia, such as obscene lyrics, acts of immorality, or excessive entertainment that distracts from religious obligations. Historical records further demonstrate that music has been interwoven with the lives of Muslims from the earliest period whether in the form of *qasidah*, *nasheed*, or Sufi practices of *dhikr*. In the contemporary era, music has taken on even broader functions, serving not only as a medium of da'wah and a means of strengthening collective identity, but also as a recognized form of medical therapy. These diverse roles highlight that music,

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<sup>55</sup> Breyley, "Between the Cracks: Street Music in Iran"; Muhamad Saddam Nurdin, Irwan Fitri Aco, and Rifqi Riswandha Idrus, "Tinjauan Hukum Islam Mengenai Pengobatan Menggunakan Metode Terapi Musik," *AL-QIBLAH: Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Bahasa Arab* 2, no. 6 (November 30, 2023): 674–705, <https://doi.org/10.36701/qiblah.v2i6.1587>; Lukmanul Hakim Hanafi, Zulkifli Mohamad Al-Bakri, and Raja Raziff Raja Shaharuddin, "Hiburan: Muzik, Nyanyian, Nasyid Menurut Perspektif Fiqh Dan Fatwa," *Journal of Fatwa Management and Research* 3, no. 1 (October 23, 2018): 83–108, <https://doi.org/10.33102/jfatwa.vol3no1.110>.

<sup>56</sup> Unyil, "TEXTUAL ANALYSIS BETWEEN HALAL AND HARAM ISLAMIC MUSIC BASED ON THE QURAN AND HADITH."

<sup>57</sup> Faisal Muhammad Nur, "Modern Challenges in Islamic Practice: The Role of Morality and Ethics," *Abrahamic Religions: Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama* 4, no. 1 (March 30, 2024): 98, <https://doi.org/10.22373/arj.v4i1.23661>.

when properly framed within Islamic values, can yield tangible benefits for both individual and community life.

The review of literature further reveals that perspectives inclined toward prohibition are often rooted in concerns over potential social harms, whereas in practice, music can be deliberately directed toward constructive purposes. When approached with sound understanding, music has the capacity to deepen spirituality, nurture communal solidarity, and even contribute to physical and psychological well-being. Therefore, future research should move toward more empirical studies of Islamic musical practices across different communities, in order to illuminate how religious values are maintained even while music is widely integrated into social life. Such inquiry is essential to ensure that the discourse on the legality of music does not remain confined to abstract normative debates but evolves into practical guidance enabling Muslims to engage with music in ways that are consistent with sharia and enriching to their spiritual and cultural existence in the modern era.

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