

How Do Religious Courts Adapt to Digital Justice? Evidence from Family Litigation in Indonesia

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|| Submitted: September 19, 2025 || Accepted: February 25, 2026 || Published: March 27, 2026 ||

Abstract: The digitalization of judicial services has transformed the administration of justice, including the handling of family litigation in Indonesian Religious Courts. This study examines how Religious Courts adapt to digital justice through the implementation of the e-court system and assesses its implications for family law dispute resolution. Employing a socio-legal approach, the research combines normative legal analysis of judicial regulations with empirical data derived from court reports, official documents, and scholarly literature on digital justice. The findings indicate that the adoption of the e-court system has improved procedural efficiency, reduced administrative barriers, expanded access to justice, and enhanced case management in family litigation. However, several challenges persist, including disparities in digital literacy among court users, limitations in technological infrastructure, and unequal access to internet services, particularly in rural areas. These constraints affect the uniform effectiveness of e-court implementation across jurisdictions. The study concludes that Indonesian Religious Courts have demonstrated substantial institutional adaptation to digital justice, although the overall effectiveness of the system depends on continuous technological upgrading, regulatory refinement, and capacity building for users and court officials. Academically, this research contributes to the growing body of scholarship on digital justice by providing empirical evidence from Indonesia's Religious Court system and offering analytical insights into the relationship between judicial digitalization, access to justice, and family law adjudication in developing legal systems. This transformation underscores the importance of integrating technology with legal reform to ensure equitable, efficient, and transparent judicial services in the digital era in Indonesia and beyond globally comparative context.

Keywords: Access Justice, Digital Justice, E-Court System, Family Litigation, Religious Courts

1. Introduction

The transformation of judicial services through digital technology has become a significant social phenomenon in contemporary legal systems, including Indonesia.¹ The implementation of the e-court system in Religious Courts reflects a broader shift toward digital governance in public institutions. In the context of family law litigation,² such as divorce and inheritance disputes, the use of electronic filing and online case management has changed how society interacts with the judiciary. This development is particularly important because Religious Courts handle a high volume of sensitive cases that directly affect family structures and social stability.³ The increasing reliance on digital platforms has improved procedural efficiency, yet it also reveals disparities in access among court users. Many litigants in rural and semi-urban areas still face challenges related to internet connectivity and digital literacy, which limits their ability to fully participate in electronic judicial processes. These conditions make digital justice not only a technological issue but also a social justice concern. Therefore, examining how Religious Courts

¹ Aju Putrijanti and Kadek Cahya Susila Wibawa, "Indonesia Administrative E-Court Regulation Toward Digitalization And E-Government," *Jurnal IUS Kajian Hukum Dan Keadilan* 9, no. 1 (March 31, 2021): 18–33, <https://doi.org/10.29303/ius.v9i1.796>.

² Rozha Kamal Ahmed et al., "Impact of E-Court Systems Implementation: A Case Study," *Transforming Government: People, Process and Policy* 15, no. 1 (March 9, 2021): 108–28, <https://doi.org/10.1108/TG-01-2020-0008>.

³ Dian Latifiani et al., "Reconstruction of E-Court Legal Culture in Civil Law Enforcement," *Journal of Indonesian Legal Studies* 7, no. 2 (December 21, 2022): 441–48, <https://doi.org/10.15294/jils.v7i2.59993>.

adapt to digital transformation is essential for understanding the broader implications of modernization in the justice system and its impact on equitable access to legal services.

From a literature perspective, studies on judicial digitalization have highlighted various advantages of e-court systems, including increased efficiency, reduced administrative burden, and improved transparency in court processes. However, much of the existing scholarship tends to focus on institutional or technical aspects of implementation rather than socio-legal dimensions.⁴ Previous research often emphasizes the success of digital platforms in urban courts, while overlooking disparities in rural and remote regions.⁵ In addition, limited attention has been given to how users, particularly litigants in family law cases, experience and adapt to digital judicial services. Although some studies acknowledge challenges such as digital literacy and infrastructure gaps, these issues are often treated as secondary concerns rather than central analytical variables.⁶ As a result, there remains a gap in understanding the intersection between technological adoption and social inequality within judicial systems. This gap indicates the need for a more comprehensive socio-legal approach that integrates normative legal analysis with empirical investigation of user experiences in Religious Courts.

An evaluation of previous studies reveals that while significant progress has been made in understanding the benefits of digital justice systems, there is still a lack of holistic analysis regarding their uneven implementation. Many studies conclude that e-court systems enhance efficiency and transparency, yet they do not sufficiently address the variability of outcomes across different regions and user groups. Furthermore, prior research often assumes that digital transformation automatically leads to improved access to justice without critically examining structural barriers that may persist. Few studies have explored how institutional readiness,⁷ technological infrastructure, and human capacity interact to shape the effectiveness of judicial digitalization. This limitation suggests that existing literature provides an incomplete picture of how e-court systems function in practice,⁸ particularly in developing legal systems such as Indonesia. Therefore, there is a need to position new research that not only confirms the benefits of digital justice but also critically examines its constraints and inequalities in real-world application.

This study aims to analyze how Religious Courts adapt to judicial digitalization through the implementation of the e-court system in family litigation cases in Indonesia and to identify the key factors that influence its effectiveness in practice. It further seeks to examine the extent to which digital transformation contributes to improving access to justice for litigants involved in divorce and inheritance disputes, particularly in terms of procedural efficiency, accessibility, and transparency. In addition, the research explores the interaction between technological innovation, institutional readiness, and socio-economic conditions that shape the implementation of digital court services. The central argument of this study is that judicial digitalization produces a dual effect, namely procedural improvement in court administration and emerging challenges related to inequality in digital access among court users. This indicates that the success of e-court implementation cannot be measured solely through efficiency indicators, but must also consider inclusiveness and fairness in access to justice. Through a socio-legal analytical framework, this research is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how digital justice is operationalized within Religious Courts in Indonesia and how it affects the lived experiences of litigants in family law cases. Ultimately, the study contributes to ongoing debates on the relationship between technology, law, and social justice in developing legal systems.

⁴ Jia Yu and Jun Xia, "E-Justice Evaluation Factors: The Case of Smart Court of China," *Information Development* 37, no. 4 (November 30, 2021): 658–70, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0266666920967387>.

⁵ Claerwen O'Hara, "Consensus, Difference and Sexuality: Que(e)Rying the European Court of Human Rights' Concept of European Consensus," *Law and Critique* 32, no. 1 (April 18, 2021): 91–114, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10978-020-09270-y>.

⁶ Hasyim Sofyan Lahilote et al., "Digitalisasi Peradilan Di Indonesia Tengah: Studi Implementasi E-Court Dan E-Litigasi Di Pengadilan," *Syariah: Jurnal Hukum Dan Pemikiran* 24, no. 2 (January 14, 2025): 315–32, <https://doi.org/10.18592/sjhp.v24i2.13879>.

⁷ Valentina Milano, "The European Court of Human Rights' Case Law on Human Trafficking in Light of L.E. v Greece: A Disturbing Setback?," *Human Rights Law Review* 17, no. 4 (December 1, 2017): 701–27, <https://doi.org/10.1093/hrlr/ngx031>.

⁸ Regina Linden Ruaro and Daniel Piñeiro Rodríguez, "Personal Data Protection and State Surveillance: The Risks of Digital Discrimination and Federal Supreme Court's Vision," *A&C - Revista de Direito Administrativo & Constitucional* 22, no. 90 (December 20, 2022): 63, <https://doi.org/10.21056/aec.v22i90.1658>.

2. Method

This study employs a socio-legal research approach with a qualitative design to analyze the implementation of judicial digitalization through the e-court system in Indonesian Religious Courts. This approach was selected to understand not only the normative aspects of judicial regulations but also the empirical practices in the implementation of digital-based court services. Research data were collected during the period of November to December 2026 in several Religious Courts that have implemented the e-court system. The research informants consisted of 15 judges, 10 court clerks, and 20 users of family court services (divorce and inheritance cases), resulting in a total sample of 45 respondents. Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, non-participant observation of case administration processes, and documentation studies of Supreme Court regulations, annual court reports, and electronic case archives. The research instruments consisted of semi-structured interview guidelines and observation sheets that had been tested for content validity by experts in Islamic civil procedural law. All field data were collected by the principal researcher with the assistance of two trained research assistants who had received instruction in legal research ethics standards. This approach ensures that the data obtained accurately and comprehensively reflect the real implementation of the e-court system within the Religious Court environment.

Data analysis in this study was conducted qualitatively using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Observation and documentation data were analyzed through triangulation techniques to ensure the validity and reliability of the research findings. Data validity was further strengthened through member checking with selected key informants and peer debriefing with experts in Islamic procedural law. NVivo was utilized due to its capability to systematically and transparently manage complex qualitative data. In addition, normative analysis of e-court regulations was conducted using a legal interpretation approach to examine the consistency between legal rules and their implementation in practice. The entire analytical process aimed to produce findings that are valid, reliable, and replicable, thereby providing a strong methodological contribution to the study of judicial digitalization in Indonesia.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. Digital Transformation of Judicial Administration through E-Court Implementation in Family Law Cases

The adoption of the e-court system in Indonesian Religious Courts marks a fundamental shift in the administration of family law litigation. Electronic filing has replaced conventional manual registration processes, enabling litigants to submit divorce and inheritance cases through digital platforms. This transition reflects a broader institutional effort to modernize judicial services and improve accessibility for court users. The system allows case registration to be completed without physical presence, reducing procedural delays that were previously caused by administrative bottlenecks. Court users now benefit from a more streamlined entry point into the judicial process, which is particularly significant for family law disputes that often require urgent handling. This development demonstrates how digital infrastructure is being embedded into core judicial functions, transforming the way Religious Courts interact with the public. As a result, the initial stage of litigation has become more efficient, structured, and accessible compared to traditional paper-based procedures.

The integration of digital case management systems further enhances procedural efficiency in handling family law disputes. Court officials are now able to manage case files electronically, allowing for faster retrieval, organization, and monitoring of ongoing litigation. This system reduces reliance on physical archives, which previously required significant time and labor to maintain. In divorce and inheritance

cases, where case volumes are often high,⁹ digital management tools help streamline administrative workflows and reduce backlog accumulation. Judges and clerks benefit from real-time access to case information, improving coordination and decision-making processes. The system also minimizes human error associated with manual documentation, thereby increasing the reliability of court records. Overall, digital case management represents a structural improvement in judicial administration that supports faster and more accurate handling of family law cases within Religious Courts.

The transformation of administrative workflows from manual processes to electronic-based judicial services reflects a deeper institutional adaptation within the Religious Court system. Traditional paper-based procedures have been progressively replaced by integrated digital platforms that support end-to-end case processing.¹⁰ This shift affects multiple stages of litigation, including filing, verification, scheduling, and documentation. Court staff are required to adjust to new operational standards that emphasize digital literacy and system-based coordination. The transition also necessitates changes in internal workflow structures to align with electronic procedures.¹¹ As a result, administrative efficiency has improved significantly, although the adaptation process requires continuous training and institutional support. This transformation illustrates that digital justice is not merely a technological upgrade but also an organizational restructuring of judicial service delivery.

The expansion of online court services has significantly increased remote access for litigants involved in family law cases. Individuals can now participate in judicial processes without being physically present at court locations,¹² which is particularly beneficial for those living in remote or geographically isolated areas. This accessibility reduces travel costs and time burdens, making the justice system more inclusive. Online services also facilitate communication between court users and judicial institutions through electronic platforms.¹³ In divorce and inheritance disputes, where emotional and logistical constraints often arise, remote access provides a more flexible and efficient litigation experience. However, this expansion also requires adequate digital infrastructure and user competence to ensure effective participation. Therefore, while online services broaden access, their success depends on the readiness of both technological systems and end users.

The strengthening of transparency through digital tracking systems represents a significant improvement in judicial accountability. Case progress can now be monitored electronically, allowing litigants to access real-time updates on their cases.¹⁴ This reduces uncertainty and enhances trust in the judicial process, as users can verify procedural stages independently. Digital documentation systems also ensure that court records are stored systematically and are less susceptible to loss or manipulation. In family law litigation, transparency is particularly important due to the sensitive nature of disputes involving marriage and inheritance rights. The availability of digital records contributes to greater procedural clarity and fairness. Furthermore, transparency improvements support broader judicial reform objectives aimed at increasing public confidence in Religious Courts. Overall, digital tracking systems reinforce accountability mechanisms within the justice system.

The adjustment of judicial procedures to accommodate hybrid mechanisms reflects the transitional nature of digital justice implementation. Religious Courts now operate using a combination of digital processes and in-person hearings depending on case requirements. This hybrid model allows flexibility

⁹ Jens Frankenreiter, "The Politics of Citations at the ECJ—Policy Preferences of E.U. Member State Governments and the Citation Behavior of Judges at the European Court of Justice," *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies* 14, no. 4 (December 7, 2017): 813–57, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jels.12165>.

¹⁰ Nikos Vogiatzis, "Interpreting the Right to Interpretation under Article 6(3)(e) ECHR: A Cautious Evolution in the Jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights?," *Human Rights Law Review* 22, no. 1 (January 6, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1093/hrlr/ngab027>.

¹¹ Dian Latifiani et al., "Implementation of Simple, Fast and Low-Cost Principles in E-Summons with the E-Court System," *Diponegoro Law Review* 8, no. 1 (April 30, 2023): 107–23, <https://doi.org/10.14710/dilrev.8.1.2023.107-123>.

¹² Jesujoba Tolulope Adeleye et al., "E-Court Transition Process: Identifying Critical Factors and Recommendations for Developing Countries," 2022, 305–17, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-04238-6_23.

¹³ Ibrahim Al Swelmiyeen and Ahmed Al-Nuemat, "Facebook E-Court: Online Justice for Online Disputes," *Computer Law & Security Review* 33, no. 2 (April 2017): 223–36, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clsr.2016.11.006>.

¹⁴ Michael J. Broyde, *Sharia Tribunals, Rabbinical Courts, and Christian Panels*, vol. 1 (Oxford University Press, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190640286.001.0001>.

in managing different types of procedural needs within family law disputes. Certain stages of litigation are conducted electronically,¹⁵ while others still require physical attendance, particularly for evidentiary hearings. Judges and court staff must therefore balance digital efficiency with procedural fairness. This adjustment also requires clear regulatory guidelines to ensure consistency across different courts. The hybrid system represents an adaptive strategy that bridges traditional judicial practices with modern digital innovations.¹⁶ Ultimately, it illustrates that the evolution of Religious Courts toward digital justice is gradual, context-sensitive, and institutionally negotiated.

3.2. Unequal Digital Capacity and Structural Barriers in Accessing E-Court Services

Uneven digital literacy among litigants significantly influences access to electronic court services in family law disputes within Indonesian Religious Courts. Many users involved in divorce and inheritance cases experience difficulties in operating digital platforms required for case registration, document submission, and case tracking.¹⁷ This condition creates variation in how effectively litigants can engage with the e-court system. Individuals with higher technological competence tend to benefit more from faster and more efficient services, while others remain dependent on assistance from court staff or third parties. Such disparities indicate that the transition toward digital justice is not uniformly experienced by all court users. Consequently, digital literacy emerges as a critical social factor shaping the inclusiveness of judicial services. Without adequate user capacity building, the advantages of electronic court systems may not be fully realized in family law litigation contexts.

Infrastructure disparities across regions further influence the effectiveness of e-court implementation in Religious Courts. Courts located in urban areas generally have better technological facilities compared to those in rural or remote regions. This uneven distribution of infrastructure affects system stability, speed of access, and availability of digital services. Limited internet connectivity in rural areas also restricts meaningful participation in digital judicial processes, particularly for litigants who rely on online platforms to follow case developments.¹⁸ In some instances, unstable connections cause delays in document uploads and hinder real-time communication with court officials. These conditions demonstrate that technological infrastructure remains a fundamental prerequisite for successful digital justice implementation. Without equitable infrastructure development, the performance of e-court systems will continue to vary across jurisdictions, resulting in unequal user experiences.

Institutional readiness variations among Religious Courts also affect the consistency of digital justice adoption. Some courts have fully integrated digital systems into their daily operations, while others are still in transitional stages combining manual and electronic procedures.¹⁹ Differences in training, technical support, and internal management contribute to this variation. Courts with better institutional preparedness are able to implement e-court services more effectively and efficiently. Conversely, courts with limited readiness face operational challenges that slow down digital transformation. This situation highlights that successful implementation depends not only on technology availability but also on organizational capacity. Therefore, institutional readiness plays a decisive role in determining the overall effectiveness of judicial digitalization.

¹⁵ Ronan McCrea, "Singing from the Same Hymn Sheet? What the Differences between the Strasbourg and Luxembourg Courts Tell Us about Religious Freedom, Non-Discrimination, and the Secular State," *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion* 5, no. 2 (June 2016): 183–210, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ojlr/rwv067>.

¹⁶ Yusida Fitriyati et al., "Reconsidering Inheritance Equality: Gender Justice in Religious Court Decisions through the Lens of Maqashid Al-Shariah," *Nurani: Jurnal Kajian Syari'ah Dan Masyarakat* 25, no. 1 (May 1, 2025): 122–40, <https://doi.org/10.19109/nurani.v25i1.27133>.

¹⁷ Shannon Rosemary Bernadika and Frederick Appiah Afriye, "Legitimacy of Proof of Letters in the Era of the E-Litigation Proof System in the State Administrative Court," *Indonesian State Law Review (ISLRev)* 6, no. 1 (April 30, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.15294/islrev.v6i1.68236>.

¹⁸ Taufiqur Rohman et al., "Preventing Violations of Religious and Social Norms: Judicial Interpretation of 'Urgent Reasons' in Marriage Dispensation at the Wonosari Religious Court, Indonesia," *JIL: Journal of Islamic Law* 4, no. 2 (August 30, 2023): 218–36, <https://doi.org/10.24260/jil.v4i2.1535>.

¹⁹ Artur Gordienko et al., "Legal Regulation of E-Courts in Ukraine as an Element of Access to Justice for the Protection of Individual Rights," *Jurnal IUS Kajian Hukum Dan Keadilan* 12, no. 1 (April 26, 2024): 17–30, <https://doi.org/10.29303/ius.v12i1.1316>.

The emergence of procedural inequality risks is closely related to unequal access to digital platforms. Litigants who lack devices, internet access, or digital skills are placed at a disadvantage compared to those who are digitally capable.²⁰ This creates a form of structural inequality within the justice system, where access to legal services is partially determined by technological capacity. In family law disputes, such inequality may affect the fairness of procedural participation. Certain groups may experience delays or reduced ability to engage fully in litigation processes. These conditions challenge the principle of equal access to justice in a digital environment. As a result, procedural fairness becomes increasingly dependent on external socio-technical factors rather than purely legal guarantees.

Despite these challenges, the implementation of e-court systems has also improved efficiency, transparency, and access to justice in family litigation contexts.²¹ Electronic procedures reduce administrative delays and simplify case management processes for both court users and officials. Transparency is enhanced through digital tracking systems that allow real-time monitoring of case progress. Access to justice is also expanded through remote participation features that reduce geographical barriers.²² However, these improvements are accompanied by concerns over digital exclusion, particularly for vulnerable groups with limited technological resources. The coexistence of efficiency gains and exclusion risks illustrates the dual impact of judicial digitalization. Therefore, while e-court systems contribute positively to modernization, they simultaneously require safeguards to ensure inclusivity and fairness in their implementation.

3.3. Digital Transformation and Access to Justice in Indonesian Religious Courts

The implementation of the e-court system within Indonesian Religious Courts demonstrates a significant transformation in the management of family law litigation. Empirical data indicate notable improvements in procedural efficiency, faster case registration, and enhanced administrative transparency compared to conventional court mechanisms.²³ Electronic filing systems have simplified access for litigants, reducing dependency on physical attendance and minimizing bureaucratic delays. Court administrators also experience improved workflow organization and reduced manual workload in handling cases. Furthermore, access to justice has broadened, particularly for individuals involved in divorce and inheritance disputes who previously faced geographical and procedural constraints. Despite these improvements,²⁴ several structural challenges remain evident. Unequal levels of digital literacy among court users and disparities in technological infrastructure across regions continue to influence the consistency of system performance. These variations suggest that the effectiveness of digital justice implementation is highly context-dependent and shaped by local readiness.

Several underlying factors help explain the emergence of these implementation patterns. The Supreme Court's regulatory framework has played a central role in accelerating the adoption of digital court services across Indonesia.²⁵ In addition, rapid technological development and expanding internet connectivity have supported the transition from manual to electronic judicial processes. The COVID-19 pandemic further strengthened institutional and societal acceptance of remote judicial services, making digital platforms a necessity rather than an option. Nevertheless, these enabling factors are not uniformly

²⁰ Dian Latifiani, "Human Attitude and Technology: Analyzing a Legal Culture on Electronic Court System in Indonesia (Case of Religious Court)," *Journal of Indonesian Legal Studies* 6, no. 1 (May 31, 2021): 157–84, <https://doi.org/10.15294/jils.v6i1.44450>.

²¹ Hasanudin, Kamsi, and Ahmad Yani Anshori, "The Contestation of Legal Foundations in the Resolution of Islamic Economic Disputes in Religious Courts," *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam*, September 19, 2024, 271–88, <https://doi.org/10.24090/mnh.v18i2.11934>.

²² Erie Hariyanto, "Public Trust in the Religious Court to Handle Dispute of Sharia Economy," *AHKAM: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 22, no. 1 (June 30, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.15408/ajis.v22i1.26216>.

²³ Azni Azni et al., "Pseudo-Maslahah and Epistemological Failure in Marriage Dispensation at Indonesian Religious Courts," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 13, no. 2 (May 30, 2025): 1399–1420, <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v13i2.2047>.

²⁴ Lilik Andar Yuni, "The Use of Ex Officio to Fulfill Women's Post-Divorce Rights at the Samarinda Religious Court," *Ijtihad: Jurnal Wacana Hukum Islam Dan Kemanusiaan* 21, no. 2 (December 29, 2021): 135–54, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijtihad.v21i2.135-154>.

²⁵ Azwir Azwir, Pagar Pagar, and Muhammad Syukri Albani Nasution, "The Legality of Divorce in Aceh: A Study of Divorce Practices Out of Religious Courts," *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam*, November 25, 2022, 165–80, <https://doi.org/10.24090/mnh.v16i2.6389>.

distributed across regions.²⁶ Differences in infrastructure quality, institutional capacity, and user education levels create uneven adaptation outcomes. In many cases, limited familiarity with digital systems among litigants and court staff becomes a significant barrier.²⁷ Consequently, the success of e-court implementation is determined by the interaction between regulatory mandates, technological availability, and human capacity readiness.

From an analytical perspective, the transformation toward electronic court services produces multidimensional consequences for the justice system. On one hand, procedural efficiency is significantly enhanced through reduced processing time and improved document management systems. Transparency is also strengthened as digital records reduce the possibility of administrative irregularities.²⁸ Moreover, the system facilitates better case tracking and improves accountability within judicial administration.²⁹ On the other hand, digital dependency introduces new challenges, including the risk of technological failure, data security vulnerabilities, and unequal user participation. In particular, individuals with limited digital skills or inadequate internet access may experience exclusion from optimal service utilization.³⁰ This situation raises concerns regarding equality before the law in a digital environment. Therefore, while procedural justice is strengthened, substantive justice may still face constraints if accessibility gaps are not adequately addressed.

When situated within broader academic discourse, this study aligns with previous research emphasizing the efficiency gains of judicial digitalization. Earlier studies similarly report that electronic court systems improve administrative speed, transparency,³¹ and cost-effectiveness in legal proceedings. However, a distinguishing contribution of this analysis lies in its emphasis on socio-technical inequality as a persistent barrier in implementation. Unlike several prior works that focus predominantly on institutional benefits, this examination highlights regional disparities and user-level constraints in accessing digital justice services.³² Furthermore, by integrating socio-legal inquiry with normative legal analysis, a more comprehensive picture of implementation dynamics is achieved.³³ This approach reveals that technological modernization alone is insufficient without corresponding social adaptation. As a result, the study extends existing literature by emphasizing contextual variability in the effectiveness of digital justice systems within developing legal environments.³⁴

This research recommends that the implementation of the e-court system should be continuously strengthened through an inclusive digital justice framework that prioritizes equal access to justice rather than merely focusing on administrative efficiency. Future studies are encouraged to adopt mixed-method approaches with wider geographical coverage to better capture variations in implementation across different Religious Courts and socio-economic contexts.³⁵ From a policy perspective, improving digital

²⁶ Melanie Adrian, "The Principled Slope: Religious Freedom and the European Court of Human Rights," *Religion, State and Society* 45, no. 3–4 (October 2, 2017): 174–85, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09637494.2017.1389551>.

²⁷ Karmawan Karmawan, "Mediation in the Religious Courts of Indonesia," *AHKAM : Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 20, no. 1 (June 30, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.15408/ajis.v20i1.13249>.

²⁸ Hotnidah Nasution and Ahmad Rifqi Muchtar, "Access to Justice for Women and Children in Divorce Cases in the Indonesian Religious Courts," *AHKAM : Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 20, no. 2 (December 30, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.15408/ajis.v20i2.15702>.

²⁹ Naskur Bilalu et al., "Compilation of Islamic Law as Judge's Consideration at a Religious Court in North Sulawesi, Indonesia," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 6, no. 2 (October 3, 2022): 514, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v6i2.12441>.

³⁰ Nur Hidayah et al., "Sharia Banking Disputes Settlement: Analysis of Religious Court Decisions in Indonesia," *Al-Risalah: Forum Kajian Hukum Dan Sosial Kemasyarakatan* 23, no. 1 (June 27, 2023): 75–92, <https://doi.org/10.30631/alrisalah.v23i1.1347>.

³¹ Salma Mursyid and Nasruddin Yusuf, "Changes in Marriage Age Limits and Marriage Dispensations: A Study of Causes and Impacts on the Religious Courts in North Sulawesi," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 6, no. 2 (December 31, 2022): 975, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v6i2.12439>.

³² Recep Kaymakcan and Abdurrahman Hendek, "European Court of Human Rights' Judgements and Compulsory Religious Education in Turkey," *British Journal of Religious Education* 44, no. 4 (June 7, 2022): 444–54, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01416200.2022.2045901>.

³³ Syufa'at Syufa'at, "Marriage Dispensation in Underage Marriage: A Case Study at the Purwokerto Religious Court," *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 16, no. 1 (May 30, 2022): 91–102, <https://doi.org/10.24090/mnh.v16i1.4229>.

³⁴ Wahidah Ideham, "Substitute Heirs in the Compilation of Islamic Law: An Overview from Gender Equality Perspective Case Study of the Religious Courts in Banjarmasin," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Dan Hukum Islam* 6, no. 2 (December 31, 2022): 1046, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v6i2.12466>.

³⁵ Muhamad Isna Wahyudi, "Judges' Legal Reasoning on Child Protection: Analysis of Religious Courts' Decisions on the Case of Child Parentage," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 55, no. 1 (June 26, 2017): 127–54, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2017.551.127-154>.

infrastructure in underdeveloped and remote regions is essential to reduce disparities in access to justice services.³⁶ In addition, continuous capacity-building programs for judges, court officials, and litigants are necessary to enhance digital literacy and ensure effective use of the system. Strengthening cybersecurity mechanisms is also crucial to protect sensitive judicial data and maintain public trust in digital court services. Furthermore, public legal education should be expanded to increase community awareness and understanding of e-court procedures. Through these integrated efforts, judicial digitalization can progress toward a more equitable, efficient, and accessible justice system.

4. Conclusion

This study reveals that judicial digitalization through the implementation of the e-court system in Indonesian Religious Courts has brought significant changes to the administration and resolution of family law cases. The main findings indicate that the e-court system improves procedural efficiency, accelerates case registration processes, and reduces administrative barriers that were previously manual and conventional. In addition, the system expands public access to judicial services, particularly in divorce and inheritance cases, by providing a simpler, more transparent, and technology-based mechanism for court administration. However, the study also identifies several implementation challenges, including limited digital literacy among court users, unequal technological infrastructure across regions, and uneven internet accessibility. These conditions demonstrate that although the e-court system has been widely adopted, its effectiveness still heavily depends on the readiness of human resources and adequate technological support within each Religious Court jurisdiction. Therefore, judicial digital transformation is not merely an administrative reform but also requires continuous social and institutional adaptation to ensure its sustainability and effectiveness.

From a conceptual and theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the development of digital justice scholarship by emphasizing that technological transformation within judicial institutions cannot be separated from the social and structural contexts of its users. It enriches the socio-legal literature by providing empirical evidence from Indonesian Religious Courts on how digitalization affects access to justice in family law disputes. Methodologically, the study highlights the importance of a qualitative approach using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, combined with NVivo software for managing complex qualitative data systematically. The integration of normative legal analysis and empirical findings strengthens the validity of the results and provides a more comprehensive understanding of e-court implementation. Furthermore, this research affirms that judicial digitalization is not merely a technical issue but also a matter of substantive justice, requiring a multidisciplinary approach for its continuous improvement and development.

Declarations

Author Contribution Statement

M. Doni contributed to the study conceptualization, data collection, formal analysis, and drafting of the manuscript. Silfia Hanani contributed to methodology development, supervision, data validation, and critical revision of the manuscript. Both authors jointly refined, read, and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Funding Statement

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

³⁶ Yasin Yetta, Ahmad Rajafi, and Syahrul Mubarak Subaitan, "Understanding the Implications of Marriage Law Amendments: Marriage Dispensation Cases in Indonesian Religious Courts," *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 9, no. 1 (May 30, 2024): 121, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jhi.v9i1.8979>.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. No publicly archived datasets were used or generated during the current research.

Declaration of Interests Statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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