



## Strategies for using Digital Space and Its Ethical Regulation in Afghanistan

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## Abstract

Digital space, or cyberspace, refers to a set of platforms and tools based on information technology that enable communication, information exchange, and the performance of individual and social activities on a broad scale. Today, this space plays a fundamental role in various dimensions of human life and has had profound social, cultural, and ethical impacts on societies. The main objective of this study is to examine strategies for the effective use of digital space and identify approaches for controlling and strengthening digital ethics in Afghan society. This research adopts a mixed-methods approach. In the first phase, a literature-based method is used to identify and analyze the most significant ethical challenges and risks of digital space, while in the second phase, a quantitative method employing a questionnaire is applied to evaluate the views and experiences of digital space users in Afghanistan. The findings indicate that a lack of sufficient awareness, weak ethical frameworks, and the absence of coherent regulatory strategies are among the most important factors contributing to ethical challenges in digital environments. Consequently, the provision of targeted training, formulation of digital ethics principles, and promotion of a culture of responsible use can play an effective role in improving the utilization of digital space and reducing its ethical harms in Afghan society.

**Keywords:** Digital Space Analysis, Cyberspace Strategies, Ethical Challenges of Digital Space, Digital Identity, Ethics in Digital Space.

## Introduction

The digital space is critical in today's life and affects both personal and social activities. With the fast growth of technology, people's lifestyles are changing. Using digital space

requires awareness and respect for ethical rules because it can create ethical problems and affect behavior and relationships. This studies issues such as privacy, discrimination, and the social and psychological effects of cyberspace. Its goal is to find ways for safe and ethical use of digital space and better management, especially in Afghanistan. It also looks at the differences between young people and adults and how to balance digital freedom with ethical rules. The study believes that with good educational, cultural, and technological strategies, many problems can be reduced. These strategies can help people use digital technology in a responsible and healthy way, which changes our perception of those actions (Baba Heidari, 1401). Use of Cyberspace: Cyberspace, given its specific capacities, can have either positive or negative impacts (Wei Liu, 2024). However, if an individual enters this space without awareness, they affected by its negative consequences. Children, as one of the most important and sensitive age groups, are particularly vulnerable to the harms of this space (Jones, 2025).

**Conflict of Digital Space with Islamic Beliefs:** If families and other educational environments expose young children to cyberspace, they will inevitably be influenced by content that contradicts Islamic beliefs (Ana Rita Lopes, 2022). Over time, families may witness an ideological gap between their own beliefs and those of their children (Peter K. Smith, 1999). The likelihood of children developing beliefs inconsistent with their religious convictions due to improper use of cyberspace is high, as cyberspace is a platform where individuals from around the world freely promote and disseminate their ideas and beliefs using attractive multimedia tools (Ali & Mehri, 1393). Certainly, not all beliefs are correct, and there is a vast diversity of incorrect or misleading ideas. Moreover, opponents of Islamic thought are widely present in cyberspace globally, and the influence of Western countries over cyberspace, along with their purposeful management of it, is undeniable (Razmi, Vahidi Kabiri, & Rajaipour, 2025). Therefore, a lack of parental control and supervision over children's use of this space can create conditions for ideological deviation and result in significant conflicts between the religious beliefs of children and their families (Nia, Bordbar, & Sobhani, 1404).

**Social Media Regulations:** Some concepts that have had specific applications in the field of information technology have also experienced significant growth with the advancement of digital space technology (Haiyan Wen, 2025). However, these advancements have encountered certain challenges, including issues related to privacy, the concept of fundamental freedoms, and ethical responsibility. Currently, the Internet and information technology are rapidly permeating all aspects of life at an unprecedented pace (Xiaolan Fu, 2021). Preventive Strategies Against

**Cyberspace Addiction:** When discussing cyberspace addiction, it refers to the amount of time an individual spends on digital space without control, to the extent that their performance is affected and they suffer harm. Implementing the strategies listed below can help prevent cyberspace addiction (Ali & Mehri, 1393). Set specific time limits for using the Internet, keep a record of the times you spend online, connect with your relatives in person instead of using your mobile phone, seek help from a specialist to manage excessive Internet use, plan your leisure time effectively, instead of browsing cyberspace, obtain electronic versions of your favorite books and read them, avoid using social media when you are with your family, and make phone calls instead of sending messages (Kehinde Aruleba, 2022).

Digital Space Education Based on Proper Usage: One of the most effective ways to counter the negative aspects of digital space and ethically regulate it is through information dissemination and education within a pedagogical digital environment (Aline F.S. Borges, 2021). Individuals are guided and self-regulated based on Islamic and religious ethics, preventing them from engaging in deviant or inappropriate behaviors (Melissa Kumaresan, 2022). Therefore, educating people on the proper use of digital space can contribute to their intellectual and moral development (Melissa Kumaresan, 2022).

Impacts of Digital Space on Society: This refers to the idea that, firstly, authorities and Internet service providers should manage the Internet in the country in such a way that access to unethical websites and content is not easily available (Yujin Jang, 16). In other words, they can establish security measures and policies so that users of digital space cannot bypass these barriers to engage in unethical activities (Malmir & Kazemi Rashid, 2025).

Action and Intervention of Educational Environments Regarding Proper Use of Digital Space: Undoubtedly, the first environment to attract attention for preventing digital harm is the educational setting and, consequently, the teachers (N Rahimi, 2024). If necessary, recommendations and training are initially provided to educational environments, making them aware of both the risks and benefits of cyberspace. It is possible to hope that the objectives of these measures will largely be achieved (Ahmad jamy Kohistani, 2024). For example, teachers can be trained to make appropriate and informed decisions regarding the content that young people and adolescents are exposed to (Rahimi, 1402). Additionally, they can learn how to respond effectively when encountering inappropriate content to minimize its negative consequences (Nasrallah Rahimi, 2025).

Preparing Mindset and Tools for Living in the Digital World: Developing a sense of responsibility for making healthy choices while using the Internet means that children learn to make appropriate decisions when facing various situations in the digital space. Thus, they become familiar with the skills necessary for proper and responsible Internet use (Pouya, Islamic Media Ethics in Intercultural Communication, 1404). Due to the way young people and adolescents learn, when they do not have access to hard-copy information, such as books and other resources, they are compelled to use digital space. Therefore, an important issue is the strategies for using digital space and ethically regulating it (Rezaei & Juyandeh, 1403).

Proper Conduct of Digital Space Users: When some individuals engage in inappropriate or unethical activities on social networks, they may also attempt to violate the privacy of others in digital space (Pouya, Islamic Media Ethics in Intercultural Communication, 1404). In my view, individuals should learn how to use digital space responsibly and how to ethically regulate it before gaining access to it (Yogesh K. Dwivedia, 37).

Strengthening the Psychological and Ethical Aspects: Considering that moral values are intrinsic and naturally appealing to humans, establishing a connection between ethics and the psychological aspects of cyberspace is essential. This connection cannot be realized unless four specific traits are present in the users of this space (Baba Heidari, 1401). Moral sensitivity, being aware of values, not indifferent to them, and responding negatively to misconduct. Discerning ability, the capacity to distinguish between good and bad actions. Ethical thinking always prioritizes moral values in decision-making. Possessing moral

virtues, acting upon ethical principles, and not merely speaking about them (Kehinde Aruleba, 2022).

Establishing Laws and Restrictions in Digital Space: In societies, individuals refuse to comply with laws and values and not only harm themselves but also lead others astray, taking pleasure in finding accomplices (Egan, 2022). The digital space is no exception. Therefore, international cooperation is needed to establish universally accepted laws to prevent cybercrimes, ensuring that individuals who misuse digital space cannot engage in unethical activities (All judgments and decisions of the European Court of Human Rights cited in this issue paper are available from the Court's case law database, 2015).

## **Material and Method**

To reach the goals of this study, it is important to explain the research method clearly. This study attempts to choose a suitable method to study the topic, Examining Strategies for Using Digital Space and Managing It in an Ethical Way in Afghan Society. A step-by-step method is used to ensure the research is correct, organized, and trustworthy. Thus, choosing the right research design and method helps us better understand the problems related to digital space and its ethical use (Nawaila, 2021).

### **Research Design**

This study uses a mixed-method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods. This helps to better understand the topic from different perspectives, including numbers and deeper meanings. The study is based on existing theories about digital space, which guide the research and analysis. (Nasrallah Rahimi, 2025).

### **Study Population and Participants**

The statistical population of this research consists of a diverse group of individuals, including university professors, students, religious school teachers, pupils, and employees of governmental institutions in Afghanistan, all of whom are engaged in questions related to strategies for using digital space and its ethical regulation. The information provided by the participants and their responses play a key role in the precise analysis of the data.

### **Sampling Design**

To achieve valid and generalizable results, a purposive sampling method was employed. A total of 203 participants were selected to ensure a representative sample of the study population. The data collected from these individuals serve as the basis for both statistical and interpretive analyses, helping to clarify the various dimensions of the research topic.

### **Methods of Data Collection**

A combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods is employed. Structured questionnaires and observations serve as the primary tools for gathering information. These methods align with the research objectives and enable the acquisition of both quantitative measures and qualitative insights. These tools are designed to extract comprehensive information regarding strategies for using digital space and ethically regulating it in Afghan society.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

The analysis of collected data involves both statistical and analytical methods. Statistical techniques, facilitated by SPSS software, are used to quantify trends and patterns in quantitative data. Qualitative data are analyzed to derive findings about the research

context. The chosen data analysis techniques directly address the research questions and ensure a thorough examination of the impacts and challenges related to the strategies for using digital space and ethically regulating it in Afghan society.

## Findings

The findings of this comprehensive study are summarized as follows:

**Table 1.** Gender Distribution of Questionnaire Participants

Demographic Variable	Gender	Sample Size	Percentage of respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	202	99.5%	100%

In this questionnaire, the total number of respondents was 202, focusing on the examination of strategies for using digital space and ethically regulating it in Afghan society, with 100% being male. The responses were predominantly positive (99.5%), while only 0.5% expressed cautious or negative opinions. This analysis was conducted using SPSS software and reflects the perspectives of university professors, students, religious school teachers, and general individuals from various provinces. It is likely to have a positive impact on the results or analysis of the questions, as the respondents represent Afghan society.

**Table 2.** Characteristics of participants in the questionnaires

Characteristics of Questionnaire Respondents			
Variables	Options	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age Group</b>	18–25 years	139	68.5%
	25–30 years	32	15.8%
	30–35 years	30	14.8%
	45–65 years	2	1%
<b>Education Level</b>	High School Graduates	3	1.5%
	Bachelor’s Student	119	57.7%
	University Graduate	42	20.4%
	Master’s Degree Holder	36	17.7%
	Doctorate Degree Holder	3	1.5%
<b>Employment/Activity Status</b>	University lecturer	47	23.3%
	Government of Employees	17	8.5%
	Students	120	59.4%
	not busy	17	8.4%
	Teaching in religious schools.	2	0.5%

### Age Group

The largest number of respondents falls within the 18–25 age group (139 individuals, equivalent to 68.5%). The 25–30 age groups (about 15.8%) also participated in the research. Respondents above the age of 35 were few. Therefore, the respondents are predominantly

young people, indicating that the study mainly focuses on a digitally oriented and educated population.

### Educational Level

most respondents are undergraduate students (119 individuals, 58.7%), while another 20.4% hold a bachelor's degree. A smaller percentage holds a master's degree (17.7%) and a doctorate (1.5%). Individuals with lower educational levels (high school graduates) are relatively few. Overall, the statistical population of the study has a high level of education, which can positively affect the quality and awareness of the responses.

### Employment/Activity Status

About 8.4% of the respondents are currently unemployed, and 59.4% are undergraduate students. Additionally, 23.3% are university professors and 8.5% are employees of government institutions. Overall, most respondents are students or currently engaged in academic or professional activities, which again indicates a focus on an educated group closely related to the academic field.

Overall, all respondents possess a good level of experience, and the information obtained from the questionnaire reflects participants' practical and real-world experience in the digital space. Therefore, this statistical population can serve as a valuable source of information and insight for examining challenges, security threats, and opportunities within the digital environment.

**Graph 2:** shows that most users use the digital space without being aware of its unethical consequences.

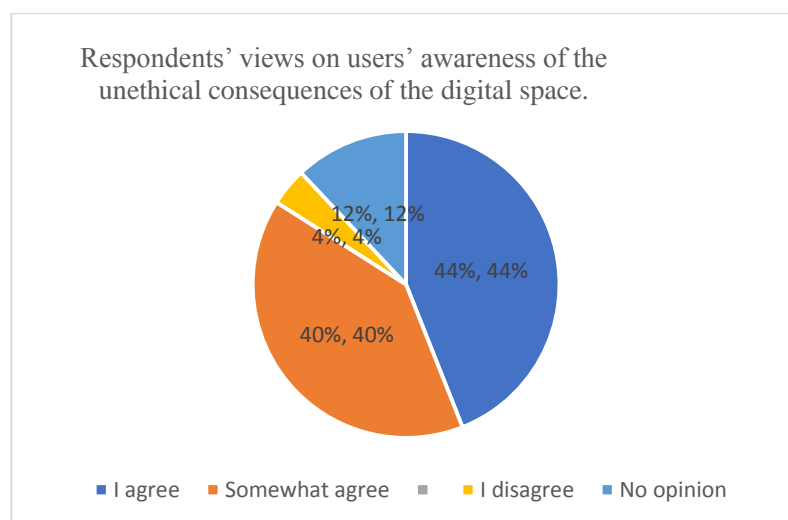


Figure2 "unethical consequences of the digital space"

Respondents' views on users' awareness of the unethical consequences of the digital space. A total of 199 individuals participated in this question. The combined level of agreement shown in the graph, including the options agree and somewhat agree, is 84%. This statistic indicates that most respondents believe that users are either fully or partially unaware of the unethical consequences of the digital environment.

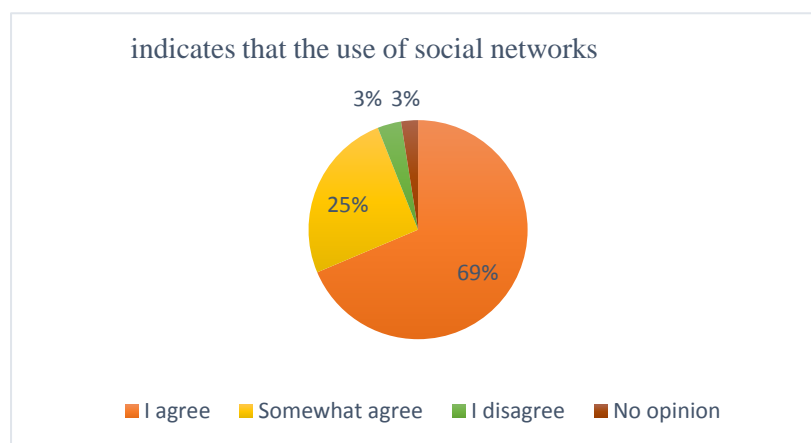
Only 12% of respondents disagree with this view and believe that users are aware. This proportion is low and emphasizes that, from the perspective of most respondents, there is a lack of awareness. A small percentage of respondents have no opinion, indicating that most respondents hold a clear view on this issue.

We can conclude that the general level of users' awareness regarding the unethical consequences of digital activity is low. This lack of awareness can lead to improper behavior, social harm, or even crimes.

Therefore, solutions to address these problems can include:

- ✚ The need for public education and awareness programs in the digital space.
- ✚ Improving digital literacy, which can be an effective measure.

**Graph 3:** indicates that the use of social networks (Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, etc.) can lead to psychological and ethical addiction.



**Figure 1: The use of social networks**

In this question, 69% of respondents answered that the majority fully believe that excessive use of social networks may lead to psychological and moral addiction, and the options "somewhat agree" account for 25%. In total, 94% of respondents have concerns in this regard. Among these participants, 3% disagreed with the view that excessive use of social networks leads to addiction, and another 3% had no opinion, while 3% of these individuals indicated that excessive use of social networks is not concerning.

**These results** indicate a serious risk regarding the psychological and moral impacts of social networks, showing that most people are aware of the dependency or negative effects of social networks. This statistic can be very valuable for educational institutions, society, and families.

**Graph 4:** Promotion of culture-building and healthy use of the digital space:

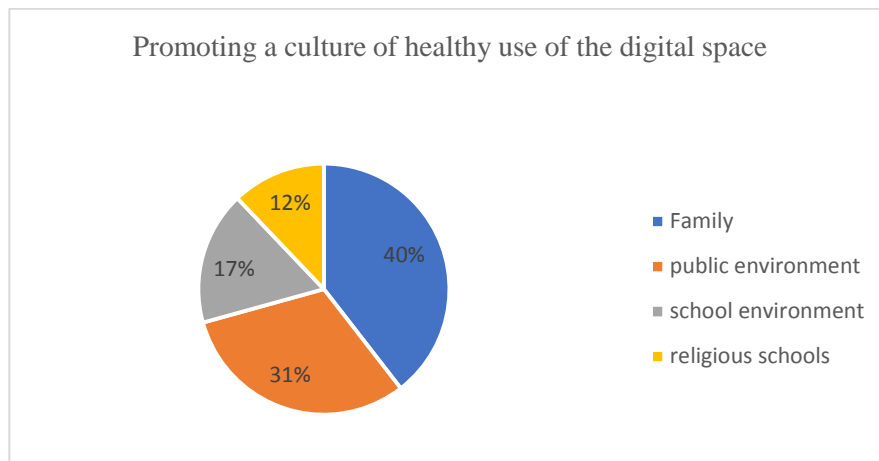


Figure 2: Promoting a culture of healthy use of the digital space

The largest number of respondents (62.3%) believes that the promotion of culture should begin within families. This indicates a strong belief in the influence of family upbringing on shaping healthy digital behavior. 49.2% of respondents also consider public and social environments to be effective, highlighting the importance of collective actions, cultural promotion, and media in changing public attitudes, supported by government facilitation. Among the questionnaire participants, 27.1% believe that schools play a role, and 19.1% refer to religious schools, considering formal and religious education to be effective. However, these lower percentages compared to family and society indicate that people see the priority in the home and community for promoting healthy use of digital space and teaching creative control.

Based on the graph results and respondents' answers, we conclude that

- ✚ The use of digital space and ethical control begins at home.
- ✚ Society and media play an important role in shaping public culture.
- ✚ Educational and religious institutions should work alongside families but cannot be effective on their own.

**Graph 5:** The laws and religious restrictions in the country regarding the ethical control or management of digital space:

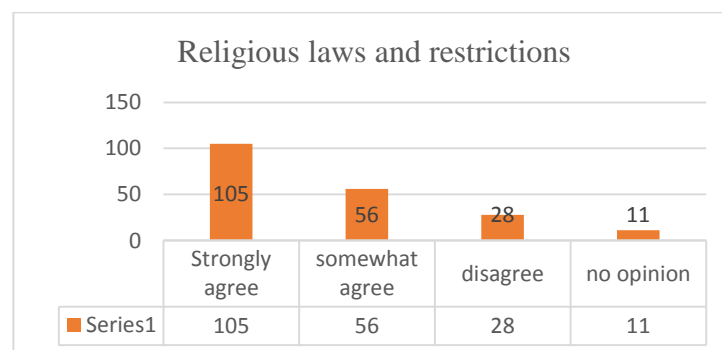
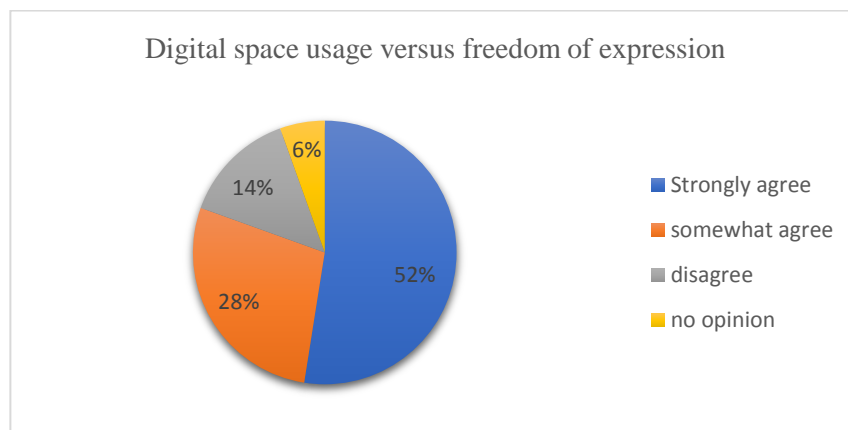


Figure 3: Religious laws and restrictions

The findings and results of the survey of 198 respondents show that 47.5% fully agree with the creation of national religious laws and restrictions for the ethical management and control of digital space. Additionally, 33.3% somewhat agree with this approach, totaling over 80% of participants. These figures indicate a broad acceptance of the role of religious and national legislation in regulating digital content. In contrast, only 12.6% disagreed with this view, and 6.6% had no opinion. This data shows that most respondents support the idea that legal policies and restrictions based on religious values and principles can be an effective tool for maintaining public ethics in the digital environment. However, the presence of disagreements and neutral responses also highlights the need to consider diverse viewpoints and possible concerns about individual freedoms, pluralism, and the implementation of such laws. These findings provide an important basis for policymakers, legislative bodies, and cultural promotion organizations to design regulations that balance the preservation of ethical values with the protection of users' rights in digital space. Overall, the results indicate that the majority of respondents support establishing religious laws for controlling digital use and ethical management. However, these laws should not completely eliminate freedom of expression; restrictions must be set in a way that maintains a balance between religious values and individual freedoms.

**Graph 6:** Survey statistics on digital space usage versus freedom of expression, highlighting the consequences of publishing unethical content:



*Figure 4: Digital space usage versus freedom of expression*

In this survey, 198 people participated, and most respondents—80.8%—agreed with the statement that freedom of expression in the digital environment should not lead to the dissemination of unethical content. Additionally, 11.1% of participants somewhat agreed with this view, indicating a consensus on the need to set boundaries for freedom of expression to protect ethical norms in the digital space. In contrast, only 4.0% rejected this view, and the same percentage had no specific opinion. These data suggested that, from the perspective of most users, freedom of expression should not be absolute or unconditional; rather, it should be managed within the framework of ethical principles and social responsibility. This perspective can serve as a foundation for developing cultural, legal, and media policies that, while respecting fundamental freedoms, prevent the erosion of ethical standards in the digital environment. Ultimately, based on the

findings, it can be concluded that most digital space users support freedom of expression, but not in an absolute sense – rather within a framework that ensures ethical protection.

**Graph 7:** Perspectives regarding education on the proper use of digital space:

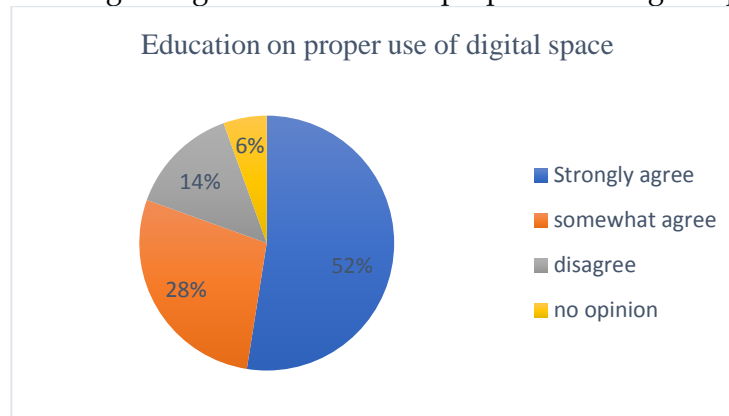


Figure 5: Education on the proper use of digital space

In this section, 198 people participated, showing that most respondents 73% fully agree with proper education on the use of digital space, while 15% somewhat agree with this view. Only 12% had no opinion, and less than 1% disagreed. These statistics highlight the importance and necessity of digital space education from a public perspective, indicating that society is aware of both the challenges and opportunities of digital space and desires structured and purposeful guidance on its use. The survey results and graph indicate that the majority agree on the significance of proper education in the digital space, emphasizing that it is essential for effective and responsible use.

**Graph 8:** Shows that internet and digital service providers can prevent unethical content in the digital space:

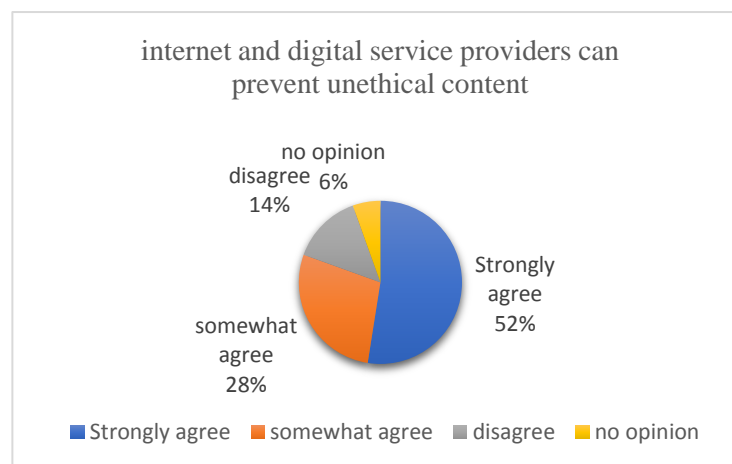


Figure 6: Unethical content in the digital space

They can prevent the spread of unethical content in the digital space. Additionally, 28% of respondents somewhat agree with this view, reflecting significant trust in the role of these companies in managing digital content. At the same time, 14% have no opinion, and only

6% disagree, which may stem from concerns about technical limitations, insufficient oversight, or restrictions on freedom of expression. Overall, these findings indicate that most participants are optimistic about the ability of digital service providers to curb unethical content. However, the presence of differing opinions highlights the need for careful consideration in lawmaking, operational transparency, and broader social dialogue. These statistics and results show that most participants believe and strongly agree that this section shows 52% in the capability of digital service providers to control and prevent the dissemination of unethical content.

### **High use of digital space among youth**

most digital space users in Afghanistan are young people (18–25 years old), accounting for more than 60% of respondents. This indicates that the younger generation has the greatest influence on the digital environment in Afghan society, yet they have limited awareness of both the opportunities and threats of digital space.

### **Users' awareness of ethical consequences in digital space**

According to the survey, over 80% of respondents believe that users access digital space without understanding its unethical consequences. This reflects the weaknesses in the country's educational, cultural, and media systems regarding digital literacy. Therefore, strategies for digital space use and ethical control should primarily target this group.

### **Role of religious knowledge in strategies for ethical use of digital space**

More than 86% of participants believe that the lack of religious awareness is a major factor contributing to unethical behavior in digital space. This highlights the pivotal role of religious knowledge in preventing unethical digital behavior.

These results also show that most respondents (94%) believe excessive use of social media can lead to psychological addiction and ethical harm. This finding emphasizes the need for technological literacy education and time management for social media use.

### **Role of family in strategies for ethical use of digital space**

most respondents, over 60%, believe that promoting responsible digital use should start at home. Following this, the roles of society, schools, and religious institutions become important. These findings underscore the importance of digital education within the family, highlighting the family's responsibility in shaping children's digital behavior.

## **Discussion**

This study began with a detailed review of qualitative research literature. At this stage, efforts were made to identify key and influential factors addressed in previous studies. The findings of this section showed that some factors have a direct relationship with the research title, namely, "Examining strategies for the use of digital space and its ethical control," and can be used as a foundation for the field section of the research. In the second step, a questionnaire was designed and distributed among the statistical population (Nasrallah Rahimi, 2025). Participants took part in this survey. Since the questionnaire was designed in an open format without restrictions on responses, participants provided diverse opinions and perspectives, reflecting different understandings of ethical issues in the digital space. Finally, the data obtained from the literature review were compared and analyzed alongside the results of the questionnaire. This comparison contributed to a

deeper understanding of the topic, provided practical recommendations, and identified the research limitations (Ahmad jamy Kohistani, 2024).

## Conclusion

In Afghan society, digital space usage presents many opportunities, but due to a lack of awareness and insufficient supervision, these opportunities often turn into ethical challenges. In Afghan society, the digital space, alongside the opportunities it provides for intellectual, communicative, and educational growth, has become a platform for serious ethical, behavioral, and cultural challenges due to insufficient awareness, weak structured education, and lack of effective supervision. Users, particularly the younger generation, face threats such as media addiction, the spread of unethical content, online violence, and intellectual misguidance. To manage these challenges and ensure healthy use of digital space, comprehensive and localized strategies are essential. Firstly, families, as the primary educational institution, must play the main role by raising awareness, providing supervision, and serving as role models to teach responsible usage to their children. Schools, religious institutions, and educational centers should also incorporate digital literacy, media ethics, and religious awareness into curricula to cultivate a responsible digital generation. Additionally, media outlets and domestic social networks should prioritize producing cultural, educational, and ethical content to raise public awareness. The role of the government and civil institutions is crucial; without clear, modern regulatory, legal, and educational frameworks, effective ethical and content control in the digital space cannot be achieved. Ultimately, creating an aware, responsible, and committed society in the digital space is only possible through the collective cooperation of families, educational institutions, religious bodies, media, and the government. Only in this way can the threats of the virtual space be transformed into opportunities and used for the healthy and sustainable development of Afghan society.

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## Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

## Conflicts of Interest

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

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