

Artificial Intelligence and Islamic Legal Reasoning: Reconstructing Ethical Governance for Sharia Decision-Making Systems

Ahmad Muhtar Syarofi^{1*}, Chernon Jallow², Bilaly Sangare³

¹Universitas Al Qolam Malang, Indonesia

²University of the Gambia

³Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, Türkiye

*Corresponding Author: syarofi@alqolam.ac.id

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A B S T R A C T

The development of artificial intelligence (AI) has transformed decision-making processes, including those within Islamic law based on *ijtihad* and *maqāṣid al-shari'ah*. However, the integration of AI introduces an epistemological tension between computational logic and normative legal reasoning, which requires moral and methodological justification. This study aims to analyze this tension and reconstruct an ethical governance framework for AI in sharia based decision making systems. The research employs a qualitative normative conceptual approach based on scopus indexed literature. The analysis is conducted using content analysis and thematic analysis to identify the relationship between AI governance, *usul al-fiqh*, and *maqasid al-shari'ah*. The findings indicate that *ijtihad* is characterized by textual interpretation, *usul al-fiqh* methodology, contextual judgment, and consideration of *maṣlaḥah* within the objectives of sharia, whereas AI operates through data processing, computational logic, and algorithmic analysis. This difference creates an epistemic discontinuity, particularly in addressing *niyyah*, *maṣlaḥah*, and *ta'lil al-aḥkam*. The study also identifies a hybrid epistemic authority model that combines scholars as normative authorities and AI as an analytical tool. While this model enhances efficiency, it risks shifting epistemic authority if not properly governed under Sharia principles. This research proposes a shariah compliant AI governance framework that integrates *maqasid al-shari'ah*, AI governance, and *ijtihad* as mechanisms of epistemic control. AI is positioned as a decision support system under the authority of Islamic scholars. The contribution of this study lies in the development of an Islamic based ethical AI framework and its implications for digital fatwa systems and Sharia AI governance.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, islamic law, maqasid al-shariah, ai governance, islamic jurisprudence



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Introduction

The development of artificial intelligence (AI) has brought significant transformation across various sectors of life. This includes law, economics, education, healthcare, and public governance. Digital technologies have contributed to legal processes for more than 30 years (Contini et al., 2024). Many of these technologies have entered the market and are now being utilized by law firms and legal publishers (Kolkman et al., 2024). AI is no longer understood merely as an automation tool. It has evolved into a data-driven decision-making system that influences social behavior, institutional policy, and contemporary legal practice. As this technology advances, more automated functions can be integrated into decision-making processes (Barysé & Sarel, 2024). Moreover, AI is also viewed as a technology that enables human self-actualization. It supports the development of individual potential, interests, and aspirations in an adaptive manner (Floridi et al., 2018). In the legal field, AI is used through legal analytics, predictive justice, automated decision-making, and digital compliance systems. These applications enhance efficiency, accuracy, and the speed of legal analysis. This transformation demonstrates that AI has become an essential element in the construction of modern technology-based governance systems.

This development generates significant epistemological and normative consequences when confronted with Islamic legal systems. In Islamic jurisprudence, Sharia reasoning is constructed through the process of *ijtihad*. This process involves interpretation of the Qur'an, Hadith, *ijma'*, *qiyas*, and *usul al-fiqh* methodologies. At the same time, digital technological advancement has driven the emergence of AI-based systems. These systems support fatwa recommendations, Sharia compliance analysis, classification of Islamic legal rulings, and digital religious consultation services. These applications should be distinguished between fatwa as a process and fatwa as a product. As a process, fatwa involves methodological reasoning, contextual analysis, and scholarly judgment in deriving a legal opinion. As a product, fatwa refers to the resulting legal opinion communicated to the public.

AI may support the fatwa process through information retrieval, legal classification, and analytical assistance. However, the authoritative validation of the resulting fatwa remains dependent on qualified Islamic scholars. Although these technologies improve accessibility to religious services, concerns arise regarding the validity, authority, and conformity of AI outputs with Islamic scholarly traditions (Usmonov, 2025). Ethical considerations in the application of AI in fatwa processes are also a highly important aspect (Rahim et al., 2025). As part of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, AI plays a role in process automation and data-driven decision making (Sarea et al., 2021). This role requires mechanisms that ensure alignment with *fiqh* principles and collaboration with religious authorities (Abedin et al., 2022). This indicates a shift from a single-scholar-based authority toward a hybrid model combining Islamic scholarly authority and algorithmic systems.

A distinctive feature of Islamic legal reasoning is that *ijtihad* is not merely a process of extracting conclusions from available information. Rather, it is a disciplined normative process that requires methodological competence, textual interpretation, contextual judgment, and ethical responsibility. Classical and contemporary *usul al-fiqh* establish methodological principles for a qualified *mujtahid*. Using these principles, the *mujtahid* interprets the Qur'an and Sunnah, and applies legal reasoning through instruments such as *qiyas* and *ijma'*. The *mujtahid* also identifies relevant legal causes ('*illah*') and considers the objectives of Sharia (*maqasid al-shari'ah*), balancing *maṣlaḥah* and *mafsadah*. *Ijtihad* also requires attention to the changing social context (*al-waqi'*) in which a legal ruling is applied.

Accordingly, the legitimacy of an *ijtihad*-based ruling depends on more than the informational accuracy of its underlying evidence. Methodological validity, ethical judgment, and accountability of the qualified jurist also shape this legitimacy. These characteristics distinguish *ijtihad* from computational decision-making, where outputs are primarily generated through data processing, statistical inference, and algorithmic optimization. Therefore, the integration of AI into Sharia decision-making requires a clear distinction. This distinction separates AI's computational capacity from the normative, methodological, and ethical functions inherent in *ijtihad*.

In various countries, the utilization of AI within the sharia ecosystem is rapidly expanding. This growth is particularly evident in Islamic financial technology (Fintech) and sharia-based robo advisory systems. It also includes Sharia compliance audit systems and digital fatwa services. However, the imbalance between technological innovation and regulatory and fatwa readiness remains a major challenge (Azwar et al., 2025).

On the one hand, these technologies enhance service efficiency and expand access to religious guidance. On the other hand, they create an urgent need for an Islamic legal framework that is adaptive to AI development (Malik et al., 2024a). Scholars also emphasize the importance of ensuring that AI-based fatwas remain compliant with Islamic standards (Raquib et al., 2022). However, the integration of AI into Islamic legal systems introduces new complexities. They arise from fundamental differences between computational logic in AI and Islamic legal reasoning. Islamic legal reasoning encompasses moral dimensions, *maqasid al-shari'ah*, public interest (*maslahah*), social context, and ethical reasoning in *ijtihad*.

The main problem arises when AI systems are used in Sharia decision-making without an adequate ethical governance framework. Modern AI systems are generally built on data efficiency and automation. Yet they do not fully accommodate issues of algorithmic transparency, decision accountability, data bias, and the legitimacy of Islamic scholarly authority. AI systems are also vulnerable to bias originating from both data and algorithms (Ferrara, 2024). Furthermore, law does

not always fully capture the moral and spiritual dimensions embedded in AI technology (Ali et al., 2025). In practice, this may produce epistemological bias when datasets fail to represent the diversity of Islamic schools of thought, Muslim social contexts, and *maqasid al-shari'ah* principles. In addition, a fundamental question emerges regarding authority legitimacy: to what extent can algorithmic decisions replace human *ijtihad* in Islamic law?

Previous studies have extensively explored the relationship between AI and Islamic law, particularly in Islamic finance, fatwa digitalization, and religious service transformation. Some studies suggest that Islamic jurisprudence can support AI adoption for public benefit (*maslahah*). These studies also critically engage with utilitarian approaches in technological ethics (Elmahjub, 2023). In Kaarimullah, it is stated that there is no fundamental barrier in Islamic tradition to the adoption of AI in work environments. However, caution is required to preserve moral values (Ghaly, 2024).

Furthermore, research from an Islamic legal perspective emphasizes the importance of developing sharia-compliant AI. This development requires a balanced approach between innovation, challenges, and ethical considerations (Wazin et al., 2025). In addition, Islamic-based ethical oversight is required, emphasizing justice, transparency, and protection of human dignity (Kannike & Fahm, 2025). In another perspective, AI is positioned as a tool that must align with the principles of justice (*'adl*) and trust (*amanah*). It must also align with public interest (*maslahah*) and consultation (*shura*). At the same time, it supports the human role as *khalifah* (Khotimah et al., 2025).

According to Ahmed et al., artificial intelligence (AI) is capable of enhancing legal research. It does so through data processing, handling large volumes of information, and simulating analytical reasoning in Islamic law. However, AI does not fulfill the fundamental requirements for legitimate *ijtihad*. This is because AI lacks moral agency and *shar'i* accountability, which are two essential prerequisites for a *mujtahid*.

Moreover, AI does not possess *niyyah*, moral integrity, or ethical capacity. These qualities are essential components of Islamic legal reasoning (Mohamed et al., 2026). Meanwhile, Bukhait's findings indicate that AI can function as a supportive instrument in fatwa production. However, AI cannot replace Islamic legal experts (*mufti*). Therefore, scholarly supervision and strict protocols are required to ensure doctrinal integrity and Sharia compliance of AI-generated fatwas (Al-Harbi, 2025).

Despite the growing body of research on AI and Islamic law, one area remains underexplored. Few studies specifically address the reconstruction of ethical governance for AI within sharia decision-making systems. Most existing studies are still normative in nature. These studies have not comprehensively integrated *usul al-fiqh*, *maqasid al-shari'ah*, and technology governance theory within a unified

analytical framework. This reflects a conceptual gap in integrating Islamic ethics into AI system design. This gap is particularly evident in supporting accountable, transparent, and just Sharia decision-making in the era of generative AI and algorithmic systems.

On the other hand, global AI governance is still largely dominated by Western paradigms emphasizing data privacy, digital security, and algorithmic transparency. Although important, such frameworks do not fully accommodate spiritual, moral, and public welfare dimensions that are central to Islamic law. In the context of increasing AI utilization in Islamic financial services, digital fatwas, and Sharia compliance systems, this imbalance highlights an urgent need. A new conceptual framework must reconstruct the relationship between AI, Islamic ethics, and sharia legal reasoning in an increasingly digitalized society.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to reconstruct ethical governance in AI-based Sharia decision-making systems. AI is not only positioned as a technological instrument. It is also part of the Islamic legal governance ecosystem requiring ethical, epistemological, and institutional legitimacy. The proposed framework integrates *maqasid al-shari'ah* principles, algorithmic transparency, digital accountability, and Islamic scholarly authority in AI utilization. Theoretically, this study expands contemporary Islamic legal scholarship through the integration of digital technology and sharia reasoning. It also contributes to the development of Islamic-based AI ethics. Practically, this study is expected to serve as a reference for fatwa institutions, Islamic financial regulators, technology developers, and Islamic educational institutions. These institutions can use it when designing AI systems that are technologically efficient and aligned with the objectives and ethics of Islamic law.

Research Method

This study employs a qualitative approach with a normative conceptual research design. It focuses on reconstructing an ethical governance framework for artificial intelligence in sharia-based decision-making systems. Qualitative research oriented toward documents and literature emphasizes meaning interpretation and textual analysis. It also emphasizes the development of conceptual understanding in scientific inquiry (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Accordingly, this study is not oriented toward statistical hypothesis testing. Instead, it develops an integrative conceptual framework linking AI governance and Islamic legal reasoning. This framework is grounded in *maqasid al-shari'ah*.

From a methodological perspective, research is fundamentally understood as a process of constructing claims. These claims are supported by reasons and evidence that answer the research questions (Booth et al., 2016). This study therefore emphasizes scientific argumentation grounded in concepts and logical reasoning. This approach differs from mere empirical description.

The data sources in this study consist of secondary literature. These sources include reputable Scopus indexed journals, academic books, international proceedings, and policy documents. The documents relate to AI governance and to digital Islamic legal and economic regulations. The data also include literature on *usul al-fiqh*, *maqasid al-shari'ah*, and contemporary AI ethics. Additional sources cover algorithmic governance and digital decision-making systems. Literature was retrieved from Scopus, Web of Science, and DOAJ. Data collection follows purposive literature selection based on relevance to AI, Islamic law, technology ethics, and digital governance. The selection covers publications from 2020 to 2026, prioritizing internationally reputable sources.

Data analysis in this study uses content analysis and thematic analysis (Krippendorff, 2018). The process begins with data reduction through the selection of relevant literature. The literature is then categorized into five key concepts. These concepts are AI governance, Islamic legal reasoning or *ijtihad*, *maqasid al-shari'ah*, algorithmic ethics, and sharia-based decision making systems. An interpretive process then identifies conceptual relational patterns among these concepts. This process supports construction of a model that reconstructs ethical AI governance in Islamic law.

To ensure conceptual validity, this study employs source triangulation. This triangulation compares perspectives from global AI governance studies with classical and contemporary Islamic legal literature. Convergence is identified when both traditions affirm the same normative principle, such as transparency or accountability. Divergence is identified when one tradition raises a concern absent from the other, such as spiritual accountability in Islamic legal reasoning. A normative hermeneutic approach is also used to interpret Islamic legal texts. This approach ensures contextual relevance to developments in digital technology. The findings are then synthesized into a new conceptual framework. This framework integrates *maqasid al-shari'ah* principles with AI governance principles such as transparency, accountability, fairness, and human oversight. The framework applies specifically within AI based Sharia decision making systems.

Results and Discussion

Epistemic Tension Between AI Governance and Islamic Legal Reasoning

The analysis reveals a fundamental epistemological tension between artificial intelligence (AI) systems and the structure of Islamic legal reasoning. Modern AI governance is built upon computational logic grounded in statistics, machine learning, and algorithmic optimization. This logic prioritizes efficiency, prediction, and data-driven accuracy. Within this paradigm, truth is understood as the result of statistically verifiable data correlations. In contrast, Islamic legal reasoning operates within a normative epistemological framework. This framework is grounded not only in textual sources (*nas*), but also in the process of *ijtihad*. *Ijtihad* involves

contextual interpretation, legal analogy (qiyas), consensus (ijma'), and the objectives of Sharia (maqasid al-shariah). This difference in epistemic foundations creates a significant tension in the integration of AI into Islamic legal systems. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that these sources may not provide detailed guidance for modern challenges. Such challenges include those posed by AI (Elmahjub, 2023).

Characteristics of ijtihad demonstrate why AI-generated outputs cannot replace authoritative Islamic legal reasoning. Ijtihad requires qualified mujtahids to apply usul al-fiqh and consider context. It also requires assessing maslahah and mafsadah, and upholding the objectives of sharia (maqasid al-shariah). These processes require normative judgment and ethical responsibility. AI, by contrast, processes data through computational and algorithmic mechanisms without the qualifications and normative responsibility of a mujtahid. Therefore, AI should function as a supporting instrument rather than an autonomous agent of ijtihad.

This tension can be understood as an epistemic discontinuity, a structural mismatch between two forms of knowledge production. AI produces knowledge based on statistical patterns in data. Islamic law constructs normative validity through deliberative and hermeneutic processes. AI operates through statistical generalization of historical data. Islamic law, by contrast, requires consideration of social context, morality, and dimensions of public interest (maslahah) that are not always quantifiable.

Malik et al. state that AI offers significant benefits through its ability to learn, process information, and make decisions. However, it also introduces new challenges in the application of Islamic law (Malik et al., 2024). In this context, AI-generated decisions may appear computationally optimal but are not necessarily normatively valid from a sharia perspective. This demonstrates that validity in AI does not equate to legitimacy in Islamic law.

Furthermore, AI systems often lack epistemic capacity to capture key concepts in Islamic jurisprudence. These concepts include intention (niyyah), justice (adl), public interest (maslahah), and harm prevention (mafsadah). Such concepts are qualitative, contextual, and often irreducible to quantitative variables within algorithmic systems. As a result, there is a risk of reductionism. The complexity of Islamic law may be reduced when mapped onto data-driven decision-making models. Such reduction may eliminate the moral and spiritual dimensions that form the core of Islamic legal epistemology. According to Dworkin, "the right answer" is not a metaphysical fact waiting to be retrieved from a database. It is instead a normative ideal constructed through moral argumentation (Dworkin, 2006).

In addition, the black-box nature of many modern AI models further intensifies this epistemological tension. The lack of transparency in algorithmic decision-making processes complicates normative verification from the perspective of usul al-fiqh. This opacity is often referred to as the black-box problem. It is not merely a

technical issue of interpretability, but also a crisis of democratic legitimacy (Zheng, 2026).

In Islamic law, every legal ruling must be supported by a clear argumentative basis (*ta'lil al-ahkam*). AI, however, often produces outputs without traceable justification accessible to users. This creates a serious problem of epistemic accountability in the application of AI within Sharia domains. Moreover, algorithms inherently produce biased decisions. Their design and functionality reflect the values of their creators and intended uses. This occurs insofar as a particular design is selected as the most efficient or optimal option (Mittelstadt et al., 2026).

From the perspective of knowledge governance theory, AI cannot be positioned as an epistemic authority within Islamic law. These findings indicate that AI functions only as an instrumental decision support system. Theoretically, this underscores a clear distinction between epistemic authority (normative authority) and computational authority (technical authority). The integration of AI into Islamic law can only be justified under certain conditions. It must operate within the framework of scholarly epistemic control. It must also follow the principles of *maqasid al-shariah* as the highest normative structure.

Accordingly, the relationship between AI and Islamic law should be understood as complementary rather than substitutive. AI expands analytical capacity, but it does not alter the normative authority structure within *ijtihad*. The key implication of these findings is the need for ethical governance grounded in *maqasid al-shariah*. Such governance can prevent epistemological distortion in technology-assisted Islamic legal decision-making processes.

Transformation of Authority and the Emergence of a Hybrid Model in Sharia Decision Making

The findings indicate a structural transformation in Islamic legal authority. This transformation follows the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) within the digital Islamic ecosystem. Historically, authority in issuing fatwas has been human-centered. Legal validity was grounded in the epistemic, moral, and spiritual capacities of a *mujtahid*. Such capacities required expertise in *usul al-fiqh* and established methodologies of *ijtihad*. Within this configuration, legal authority is not merely technical but inherently normative. It is embedded in the scholarly responsibility of interpreting sacred texts within their socio-contextual realities.

However, the digitalization of knowledge and the advancement of AI have gradually shifted this structure towards a more distributed configuration. Contemporary sharia decision-making no longer operates exclusively within the human domain. It now involves interactions among human actors, data infrastructures, and machine learning algorithms. Coglianese and Ben-Dor argue that fully algorithmic decision-making remains relatively limited. Algorithmic outputs are typically used as inputs for human judgment (Coglianese & Ben-Dor, 2021). Similarly, Chiao highlights that algorithmic systems can enhance the accuracy

of human legal decision-making (Chiao, 2024). This shift reflects a broader transition from a unitary authority model to a distributed epistemic structure in Islamic legal reasoning.

From the perspective of epistemic governance, this development gives rise to what can be termed hybrid epistemic authority. This is a mixed configuration of authority in which Islamic scholars retain normative legitimacy. Within this configuration, AI functions as a data-driven analytical system. In this model, AI is deployed in tasks such as Sharia compliance analysis and legal classification. It also supports fatwa systems and algorithmic auditing. Rather than functioning as an independent source of legal authority, AI operates as epistemic infrastructure. This infrastructure extends analytical capacity within the *ijtihad* process. In this regard, AI applications aligned with *maqasid al-shariah* may be understood as instruments for achieving public benefit (Alafaghani, 2026).

The distinction between fatwa as a process and fatwa as a product clarifies the role of AI. This role becomes clear in sharia decision-making. As a process, fatwa involves the methodological and contextual reasoning of qualified scholars. In this process, AI can provide analytical support through information retrieval, legal classification, and comparison of relevant sources. As a product, however, fatwa represents an authoritative legal opinion that requires scholarly validation and responsibility. Therefore, AI may contribute to the process of producing a fatwa. However, its output should not be regarded as an authoritative fatwa without review and validation by qualified Islamic scholars.

Nevertheless, delegating epistemic functions to AI without a robust sharia governance framework generates significant legitimacy concerns. This is primarily due to AI's inability to provide normatively verifiable justification within a *usul*-based framework. Compounding this, the black-box nature of many algorithmic systems further complicates epistemic auditing. In Islamic legal theory, the validity of legal rulings requires traceable argumentative justification (*ta'lil al-ahkam*). AI systems, however, often generate outputs without transparent methodological explanation. This creates an epistemic accountability gap between computational validity and normative legitimacy.

Addressing this gap requires explicit ethical grounding rather than procedural safeguards alone. According to Bendebka, as cited in Mohadi and Tarshany, this ethical grounding is essential. Artificial intelligence must be developed and applied in alignment with ethical principles derived from *maqasid al-shariah* (Mohadi & Tarshany, 2023). Similarly, Kamali, as cited in Mustapha et al., presents a parallel argument. AI technology corresponds with the Islamic jurisprudential principle of *maslahah al-mursalah* (Mustapha et al., 2025). This principle considers public interest and the positive impact of AI across various domains for individuals and society.

Moreover, increasing reliance on algorithmic systems may gradually shift epistemic authority away from scholars toward technological infrastructures. This shift is not merely technical but structural, as it affects the foundational legitimacy of Islamic scholarly authority. If left unregulated, it may lead to the fragmentation of epistemic sources. It may also cause the erosion of traditional scholarly authority within digital fatwa ecosystems. Usmonov emphasizes that fatwas are not merely legal outputs. They are the result of an epistemological process involving the moral, social, and spiritual responsibility of scholars toward the community (Usmonov, 2025).

Accordingly, the hybrid model is normatively acceptable only if embedded within a sharia-compliant governance framework that ensures clear epistemic hierarchy. Within this framework, AI must not be positioned as a source of legal authority. Instead, it functions as an epistemic assistant that enhances analytical processes, while final normative authority remains with qualified mujtahids. This establishes a tripartite structure. Islamic scholars serve as normative authorities, AI functions as an analytical system, and maqasid al-shariah operates as the normative constraint governing legitimacy.

The implication of this model is that AI integration in Islamic law should not be understood as a substitution of authority. Rather, it represents a limited transformation of epistemic infrastructure. Maintaining a balance between technological innovation and Islamic normative authority is essential. Such balance safeguards epistemological validity, legal ethics, and the sustainability of fatwa systems in the digital era.

Reconstruction of Ethical Governance: Integration of Maqasid al-Shariah and AI Governance

The synthesis of findings indicates the necessity of a fundamental reconstruction of ethical governance for Artificial Intelligence (AI). Such reconstruction applies within sharia-based decision-making systems. This reconstruction is not merely technical but reflects an epistemological and normative shift. This shift concerns how technology is positioned within the structure of Islamic law. Crawford argues that transparency is often naively treated as a panacea for the ethical problems associated with emerging technologies (Crawford, 2015). Similarly, Burrell demonstrates that machine learning systems "learn" through a core mechanism. This mechanism involves how algorithms reclassify new inputs (Burrell, 2016). In this context, AI cannot be reduced to a purely computational instrument. It must instead be understood as a socio-technical entity with significant ethical and legal implications in decision-making environments.

Global AI governance frameworks have increasingly emphasized core principles such as transparency, accountability, fairness, system security, and explainability. These principles are designed to ensure that algorithmic systems are auditable and procedurally accountable. However, Fadilla and Indriyani argue that

equating AI-based knowledge representation with *ijtihad* is conceptually flawed. *Ijtihad* in Islamic law requires mastery of *usul al-fiqh*, the Qur'an, Hadith, and *maqasid al-shariah*. It also requires understanding of socio-contextual realities (*urf*), which cannot be fully reduced to computational systems without human epistemic supervision (Fadilla & Indriyani, 2025). Consequently, existing AI governance frameworks remain largely secular-technocratic. They prioritize procedural and technical dimensions while neglecting teleological and spiritual foundations inherent in Islamic legal thought.

From an Islamic legal perspective, this limitation is particularly significant. The value system of Islam evaluates not only procedural correctness but also the ultimate objective (*ghayah*) of actions. *Maqasid al-shariah* thus serves as the primary normative framework for reconstructing AI governance within an Islamic ethical paradigm. This paradigm requires the preservation of religion (*din*), life (*nafs*), intellect (*aql*), lineage (*nasl*), and property (*mal*). At the same time, existing AI ethics literature rarely integrates Islamic legal principles in depth. This gap results in a conceptual disjunction between global technological development and Islamic normative frameworks (Aspan, 2025). Therefore, Muchtasor emphasizes that a faith-based framework demands strict transparency and robust oversight mechanisms to prevent unjust automation (Muchtasor, 2025).

The misalignment between global AI governance and *maqasid al-shariah* reflects a broader epistemic divergence. This divergence exists between technological rationality and normative teleological reasoning. While AI governance provides technical instruments for controlling algorithmic systems, *maqasid al-shariah* offers normative direction and ethical purpose. Wahyunisa and Aminullah argue that *maqasid al-shariah* possesses epistemological capacity to function as an ethical framework for Artificial Intelligence. This framework supports sustainable digital transformation (Wahyunisa & Aminullah, 2025). Accordingly, both frameworks are not substitutive but complementary in constructing a more holistic governance system.

Based on this analysis, the study reconstructs a sharia-based AI governance model consisting of three epistemic layers. First, *maqasid al-shariah* functions as the core normative layer that defines ethical direction, objectives, and validity criteria for AI systems. Second, AI governance operates as the operational-institutional layer governing transparency, accountability, and algorithmic control mechanisms. Third, *ijtihad* serves as the epistemic validation layer ensuring that all decisions remain within the authority of Islamic jurisprudence.

However, Soufi highlights that AI datasets in Islamic legal contexts may contain *madhhab*-based or interpretive biases. This means that AI outputs are not necessarily epistemically neutral. Moreover, AI lacks the capacity to reconcile juristic disagreement in the manner of a *mujtahid*. A *mujtahid* understands methodology, context, and the plurality of Islamic legal traditions (Soufi, 2021).

The integration of these three layers produces a conceptual model of sharia-compliant AI governance. This model ensures that AI systems are not only technically efficient but also normatively legitimate within an Islamic legal framework. In this model, AI is positioned as part of a decision support system. This system operates under the supervisory authority of Islamic scholars, rather than as an independent legal decision-maker.

The implication of this model is the establishment of a balanced relationship between technological innovation and Islamic normative authority. This balance operates through a hierarchical epistemic control mechanism. AI is not rejected within Islamic legal systems. Rather, it is selectively and carefully integrated to enhance analytical capacity and decision-making efficiency. Ultimately, legal validity remains vested in scholarly authority. AI functions as an assisting instrument in achieving *maslahah* in accordance with *maqasid al-shariah*.

Conclusion

This study shows that integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) into Islamic legal reasoning generates an epistemological tension. This tension exists between data-driven computational logic and normative reasoning grounded in *ijtihad* and *maqasid al-shariah*. Consequently, technical validity produced by AI cannot be equated with normative legitimacy in Islamic law. The findings further indicate that AI lacks the epistemic capacity and moral agency required for *ijtihad*. This limitation is particularly evident in relation to *ta'lil al-ahkam*, *niyyah*, and considerations of *maslahah* and *mafsadah*. In addition, the limited transparency of algorithmic systems, often referred to as black-box systems, poses a serious accountability challenge. This challenge concerns the principle of traceability required within *usul al-fiqh*.

In this context, a hybrid epistemic authority model emerges from the findings. This model combines the role of *ulama* as normative authorities with AI as a supporting analytical system. Although this configuration may improve efficiency, it also carries a structural risk. Without strict governance, it may gradually shift the underlying structures of epistemic authority.

In response to these findings, this study proposes a sharia-compliant AI governance model. This model integrates *maqasid al-shariah*, AI governance principles, and mechanisms of *ijtihad* as an epistemic control framework. Within this model, AI is positioned as a decision support system under scholarly supervision. It is not intended to substitute Islamic scholarly authority in matters of legal judgment.

This integration affirms that AI governance in Islamic law must subordinate technology to sharia values. It must likewise remain accountable to established scholarly authority. Such subordination ensures that digital innovation stays aligned

with the normative objectives of Islamic law. It also upholds the principle of *maslahah* within the framework of *maqasid al-shariah*.

Accordingly, this study recommends the development of more detailed regulatory frameworks and operational guidelines. These frameworks should govern the use of AI in digital fatwa ecosystems and Islamic finance. They should also include sharia-based epistemic audit mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability. Such mechanisms are essential for maintaining the traceability of algorithmic decisions. Furthermore, stronger collaboration is needed between Islamic scholars, *usul al-fiqh* experts, and data scientists. This collaboration should aim to develop AI models that are technically accurate. These models must also remain normatively valid within Islamic legal principles.

As a qualitative and conceptual study grounded in secondary literature, this research has certain limitations. It does not include empirical validation through interviews, surveys, or case studies of existing AI-based fatwa systems. Future research is therefore encouraged to empirically test the proposed sharia-compliant AI governance model. Such testing should occur across various Islamic institutional contexts. This would help ensure the model's practical validity and operational effectiveness.

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