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Integration of Artificial Intelligence in Contemporary Ijtihad Process in Digital Era: Opportunities and Challenges from *Maslahat* Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Ijtihad is a dynamic mechanism in Islamic law that provides solutions to contemporary problems not explicitly explained in The Quran and Hadith. Artificial intelligence (AI) 's rapid advancement presents opportunities and challenges for contemporary ijtihad. This study aimed to explore the integration of AI in the ijtihad process through the maslahat mursalah approach. This study used a qualitative approach through literature study. Data sources were carefully selected to ensure the validity and relevance of the findings. In analyzing data, this study used qualitative content analysis techniques. The findings show that integrating AI in contemporary ijtihad offered great opportunities to support ulama in meeting the community's needs in the digital era. AI provided opportunities to increase efficiency, accessibility, and consistency in the ijtihad process. However, the application of this technology also posed challenges, such as the validity of data sources, contextual limitations, and conflict potential with the ulama authority. The study concluded that the successful implementation of AI required collaboration between ulama and technology experts, technology education in sharia studies, and strict ethical supervision. With a maslahat-based approach, AI can be an instrument that strengthens Islamic law while realizing sustainable benefits. The significance of this research lies in its contribution to bridging the gap between technological innovation and Islamic law, i.e., supporting the development of sharia-compliant AI applications to enhance the adaptability of Islamic law in the digital era.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, ijtihad, Islamic law, *maqasid shariah*, *maslahat* .

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Ijtihad is one of the main pillars of Islamic law that allows ulama to provide legal solutions to new problems not explicitly explained in the Quran and Hadith. In historical context, ijtihad has been an important tool in maintaining the relevance of Islamic law to changing social and cultural conditions (Britannica 2018). Ijtihad is a dynamic mechanism that allows Islamic law flexibility in changing times. (Hipni & Radiamoda 2023).

As technology advances, new challenges arise in the ijtihad process, especially regarding access to extensive and complex information. Technology allowed ulama to obtain information faster and required them to be more critical in assessing the validity and credibility of data. (Tamsir et al., 2023).

The digital era provides opportunities for ijtihad to be more responsive to the needs of contemporary society. Technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) can analyze data in depth and offer insights that support the process of taking legal ijtihad. However, this transformation also required a critical approach so that AI does not replace the authority of ulama as guardians of Islamic law (Pulungan & Akbar 2022). Ijtihad is a process based on logic and involves spiritual values, which often cannot be fully understood by technology (Madnur et al. 2023).

Technology has become integral to modern life and vital in many areas, including Islamic law. Technology enables Islamic law to be more accessible to the global community and supports the development of data-driven fatwas. Technology can create a more transparent, fair, and efficient ijtihad process, but it still requires sharia principles as its foundation (Umar 2021).

AI is one of the most revolutionary technologies in the digital age. Its ability to analyze big data, recognize patterns, and provide data-driven recommendations makes it worthwhile in various fields, including Islamic law (Pulungan & Akbar 2022). This technology can help ulama analyze Islamic legal texts, provide faster guidance, and ensure that legal interpretations or ijtihad are based on relevant and accurate data (Madnur et al. 2023).

This article aims to explore the integration of AI in the contemporary ijtihad process through *the maslahat mursalah* approach. This study aimed to understand how AI can support ijtihad in creating Islamic legal solutions relevant to the challenges of the modern era. This study also analyzed the extent to which AI can assist ulama in maintaining the principles of *maqasid shariah* without ignoring the potential ethical and social risks that may arise. The *maslahat mursalah* approach is used as a theoretical framework to assess the benefits and *mafsadah* of AI integration, ensuring that this technology can improve accessibility in Islamic law.

Through this study, it is expected to find an optimal strategy to integrate AI into the contemporary ijtihad process so that this technology is not only a supporting tool but also functions to realize the community's welfare. By considering the opportunities and challenges, this study makes an important contribution to the development of Islamic law in the digital era.

Literature Review

The intersection of religion and AI has become a topic of widespread interest, especially among ulama from various disciplines such as theology, philosophy, ethics, communication, and technology studies (Andrews et al. 2016). This topic focused on the technical aspects of AI and explored the philosophical and spiritual dimensions that emerge when advanced technologies interact with religious beliefs and practices. In this regard, religion often serves as a conceptual framework for understanding the implications of AI for human values, spirituality, and morality.

The literature on the interaction of religion and AI is growing and can be categorized into several main themes. These themes include new religious metaphors, which argue that AI is a symbol or manifestation of certain spiritual concepts; new religious movements, which are forming around futuristic and transhumanistic ideas; the use of AI for religious purposes, such as creating technological prayer assistants; and deep debates about human existence and purpose amidst technological dominance. These studies reflect attempts to understand how AI might influence religious beliefs or how religion might provide an ethical perspective on the development of AI technologies.

Historically, the interaction between religion and technological progress is not new. Technological progress in various eras has often triggered responses from religious communities, both in acceptance and rejection (Dipa 2024). In the context of AI, these responses concern how this technology is used and how it challenges or complements religious worldviews. For example, discussions about AI often intersect with fundamental questions about human nature, free will, and the ultimate purpose of life, which have long been at the heart of theological and philosophical reflection (Tsuria & Campbell 2021).

Early discussions on the relationship between religion and AI focused on ethical and philosophical implications rather than technological ones (Lane 2021). These debates encompassed fundamental questions about how AI might change human perceptions of universal values, such as truth, justice, and humanity. In this context, AI was often seen as a new challenge that forced religion to rethink its role and responsibilities, especially in providing moral guidance in a world increasingly influenced by advanced technology.

Rapid technological advances push religion beyond traditional definitions and boundaries that have long been considered established. This opened up space for discussion about how technology, including AI, impacts long-standing religious practices and beliefs and how it may give rise to new forms of religion. Technologies such as AI have the potential not only to support religious expression through innovations, such as prayer apps or faith-based virtual assistants but also to challenge established religious structures by offering new perspectives on spirituality and human existence.

These developments have attracted the attention of ulama and practitioners of religion who are trying to understand the future position of religion in an era of ever-evolving AI (Singler 2018). They are thinking about how religion can remain relevant amidst technological changes. Some argue that AI is an opportunity to expand the scope of religion into the digital realm. In contrast, others worry that the dominance of AI could replace the traditional authority of religion in providing moral and spiritual guidance. Thus, the discussion of religion and AI focused on the present and how religion will adapt and evolve in the face of future challenges.

The interpretation and meaning associated with religious experiences cannot be separated from the underlying cognitive processes. These include how individuals process information, relate experiences to existing beliefs, and integrate religious symbols into their world understanding. Each individual's cognitive framework, including mindset, reflective capacity, and analytical ability, is important in how religious teachings are received and interpreted. In addition, this experience is also influenced by the cultural and social context that shaped the individual's mindset, giving additional meaning to religious teachings according to dominant cultural values (Henderson et al. 2022). Religious experiences are cognitively processed to be integrated into existing belief systems, thereby strengthening or revising previously held beliefs (Mulukom & Lang 2021).

Social factors play a significant role in shaping how individuals understand and give meaning to religious experiences. Social environments, such as family, friends, and religious communities, provide the context in which one's religious experiences can be interpreted and made meaningful. Through social interactions, individuals can share their experiences, receive feedback, and gain validation for the meanings they attribute to those experiences. This process makes religious experiences more meaningful because they are recognized and accepted within a community that shares similar beliefs (Krause 2007).

Religious communities also provide a space for individuals to construct and validate their belief systems through interactions. In such communities, religious teachings are often reinforced through discussions, shared rituals, or social activities relevant to religious values. The social validation in these environments can strengthen individuals' beliefs about their religious experiences, making them more authentic and meaningful. It also helps create a sense of community and solidarity that strengthens an individual's religious identity (Lewandowsky et al. 2012).

In addition to religious communities, the role of religious authorities is also very significant in influencing the interpretation of religious experiences. Religious leaders, sacred texts, and

traditions provide an interpretive framework that individuals can use to understand their experiences. Validation by religious authorities is often seen as evidence of the authenticity of the experience, thereby strengthening the individual's belief. For example, spiritual experiences confirmed by religious leaders or stated to be in line with the teachings of a particular religion tend to provide emotional satisfaction and deeper beliefs to individuals (Lewandowsky et al. 2012).

Religious texts are embedded in a particular cultural context. AI will likely have access to a broader range of historical records than an individual ulama or group of ulama in the field. However, when interpreting religious texts, it is important to consider that they are deeply embedded in a particular cultural context. A comprehensive understanding of this context is essential for accurate interpretation (Elster 2003).

Although AI algorithms have extraordinary capabilities to process and analyze large amounts of data at speeds humans cannot match, AI still has limitations in understanding the cultural complexities and historical contexts inherent in religious teachings. Data-based processing by AI is often literal and tends to ignore the symbolic or metaphorical dimensions essential to religious texts. For example, AI interpretations of religious verses can lose their profound meaning if they do not consider the social and historical context in which the text originated (Reed 2021).

The consequence of these limitations is the potential for misinterpretation or oversimplification when AI is the primary tool for understanding religious texts. Religious texts often contain multiple meanings, symbolic nuances, and philosophical implications that can only be fully understood through in-depth study and reflection supported by contextual knowledge. Human scholars bring expertise and cultural sensitivities that algorithms cannot, such as understanding ancient languages, local traditions, and relevant social dynamics. In contrast, AI can only work based on patterns derived from existing data without the intuitive ability to interpret meaning beyond those patterns (Brown 2020).

These limitations underscore the importance of the human role in overseeing and complementing the use of AI in religious contexts. Rather than replacing human scholars, AI should be viewed as a tool that can assist in the initial analysis or large-scale processing of data. At the same time, the final interpretation remains in the hands of experts who understand the context and cultural values. Collaboration between AI technology and humans allows for a more holistic approach, combining AI capabilities with human insight to maintain the authenticity and depth of religious teachings. In this way, AI is not only a useful tool but also respects the complexity and depth of religious traditions. Cultural context plays a vital role in understanding the meaning and interpretation of religious texts. Elements such as social norms, historical events, religious practices, and cultural symbolism provide rich layers of meaning to these texts (Abdulla 2018).

The use of AI models in analyzing religious texts faces significant challenges in understanding these complexities. AI, while capable of analyzing large amounts of data, often fails to capture deep cultural nuances. Misinterpretation or neglect of cultural elements can result in incomplete or distorted analysis, impacting people's understanding of religious teachings. For example, suppose AI ignores a particular verse's symbolic connotations or historical context. In that case, the resulting interpretation may lose the essence of its meaning and even lead to significant misunderstandings (Umbrello 2023). Therefore, accuracy and sensitivity in interpreting religious texts require more than just algorithms that work literally.

AI-based approaches need to be complemented with human expertise to overcome these limitations. Ulama and practitioners bring deep knowledge of cultural traditions, historical contexts, and social sensitivities that algorithms cannot replicate. This collaboration allows AI to serve as a supporting tool to filter data patterns or identify specific text elements at scale. However, the final interpretation must be done with human insight to ensure a comprehensive understanding and respect for the cultural context behind the religious text. This approach not only improves the accuracy of the analysis but also minimizes the risk of misinterpretation that could compromise the authenticity of the meaning of the religious text.

The intersection of AI and religion has sparked significant interest, particularly among atheists and secularists who often view religious engagement with AI through a critical or sociological lens. From a secular standpoint, AI is typically seen as a product of human ingenuity and rationality, serving as a testament to the power of science and reason without requiring spiritual interpretation. Scholars like Dennett argue that religious attempts to imbue AI with spiritual or divine significance reflect a human tendency to anthropomorphize technology rather than any inherent spiritual dimension within the machine itself. Atheist thinkers like Dawkins view religious interpretations of AI as evidence of how religious narratives adapt to maintain relevance in an increasingly technological world, often appropriating scientific progress for theological purposes. In this view, AI does not directly challenge religious belief but reveals religion's sociocultural functions in a secular age (Dawkins 2006).

Secular theorists also critique the emergence of techno-spirituality and AI-based religious applications, suggesting these developments may commodify or trivialize spiritual experiences. For instance, Singler highlights how new religious movements around AI, such as those imagining AI as a deity or moral agent, are often satirical or symbolic reflections of broader cultural anxieties about power, control, and post-human futures (Singler 2019). From a sociological perspective, secular scholars argue that these AI-religion intersections demonstrate how spiritual needs are rearticulated in digital and post-religious societies rather than indicating a genuine theological shift. Furthermore, secular academics often interpret AI's role in religious contexts as a cultural adaptation to maintain authority and relevance in a technologically driven society rather than a spiritual revolution (Campbell & Tsuria 2021). In essence, atheists and secularists tend to view AI's religious applications as a mirror to human creativity, social structures, and psychological needs rather than any form of divine intervention or spiritual awakening.

Methodology

This study used qualitative content analysis as its primary research method. Given the conceptual and interpretive of the article's subject, qualitative analysis is appropriate because it allows for a nuanced understanding of values, ethical frameworks, and theological interpretations embedded in religious discourse. This approach is particularly suitable for unpacking the complex relationship between AI and religious thought, often involving symbolic, philosophical, and normative considerations rather than measurable variables.

The sources were selected based on the following criteria: relevance to the intersection of Islamic law (especially *maslahat mursalah*) and AI, inclusion of recognized Islamic scholars' views and theological discussions, and publication in peer-reviewed academic journals, reputable institutional reports, or classical jurisprudential texts. The study is based on a review of approximately 32 primary and secondary sources: classical Islamic legal books, contemporary scholarly articles, research reports, and literature on cognitive and sociocultural aspects of religious experience and interpretation.

Thematic analysis was conducted in four main steps: (1) familiarization, where all selected literature was read to gain an overview; (2) coding, in which key themes such as "AI in Islamic law," "ethical concerns," "*maslahat* considerations," and "role of ulama" were identified and labeled; (3) theme development, involving the grouping of codes into broader categories to find recurring patterns and relationships; and (4) interpretation, where themes were analyzed critically through the lens of *maslahat mursalah* to explore both the opportunities and challenges of AI integration into ijtihad. This method allowed a structured yet flexible analysis that respected the normative framework of Islamic law while accommodating interdisciplinary insights from technology ethics and governance.

Results and Discussion

Maslahat Mursalah in Context of Technology

Maslahat mursalah in ushul fiqh is defined as benefits that are not explicitly mentioned in al-Quran, Hadith, or *ijma'* but are considered relevant to realizing the goals of sharia (*maqashid sharia*). According to al-Ghazali, *maslahat mursalah* is benefits that support the achievement of the primary objectives of Islamic law, namely protecting religion, soul, mind, offspring, and property. *Maslahat mursalah* is an important tool for ulama to establish laws not explicitly explained in sacred texts, as long as these benefits do not conflict with sharia principles. *Maslahat mursalah* provides flexibility in Islamic law to answer new problems in various social and cultural contexts (Sulthon 2022).

The scope of *maslahat mursalah* covers various aspects of life, from individual issues to public issues. In the Islamic law context, ulama uses *maslahat mursalah* to address needs that are not accommodated by sharia texts, such as the establishment of a modern public transportation system or traffic management, which are not explicitly explained in the al-Quran and Hadith. However, the need is based on *maslahat mursalah* to maintain public safety. *Maslahat mursalah* is a guiding principle that ensures that Islamic law remains relevant in changing times without losing the essence of justice (Rohman 2019).

Maslahat mursalah also serves as a theory to integrate modern innovations within the framework of Islamic law. Modern technologies such as AI, for example, can be considered part of *maslahat mursalah* if their use supports the objectives of sharia. *Maslahat* should be the primary consideration in accepting technological innovations that can speed up the legal process–and protect the community's interests. However, its implementation must be carried out carefully to avoid *mafsadah* (losses) potential that can damage the balance of *maslahat* itself. This shows that *maslahat mursalah* has a strategic role in ensuring Islamic law remains adaptive, progressive, and relevant (Rohman 2019).

Maslahat, as one of the key concepts in ushul fiqh, refers to efforts to realize benefits and prevent harm to fulfill the objectives of sharia (*maqasid shariah*). This principle is the basis for establishing Islamic law relevant to society's needs. In modern technology, the principle of *maslahat* is used to evaluate innovations that can benefit the community significantly. *Maslahat* is a theoretical guide and a practical instrument that allows Islamic law to remain relevant to social and technological dynamics. With this principle, Islamic law can face the challenges of globalization and digitalization without losing its sharia essence (Quthny & Hariati 2019).

Applying the *maslahat* principle in modern technology involves assessing the benefits (*maslahah*) and potential losses (*mafsadah*). For example, AI technology can be considered part of the benefits if its use supports the benefit of people, such as in health services, education, or legal administration. Islamic law must be open to innovation that does not conflict with *the maqasid of shariah*. However, ethical evaluation is important to ensure that technology does not cause harm to society, such as privacy violations or data misuse. This principle becomes relevant for establishing sharia limits on the use of modern technology (Sulthon 2022).

In addition, the principle of *maslahat* also supports the integration of technology in the process of Islamic legal ijtihad. Using big data and machine learning technologies, ulama can analyze Islamic legal texts and provide more accurate data-based recommendations. The application of modern technology in Islamic law is a form of contemporary *maslahat* that allows ulama to respond more efficiently to community problems. However, this integration must be monitored to ensure that technology is used as a tool, not as a substitute for the ulama authority. The principle of *maslahat* is the main criterion in determining the extent to which technology is acceptable within the Islamic law framework (Rohman 2019).

The principle of *maslahat* also encourages ulama to consider the long-term impact of modern technology on society. For example, implementing AI in Islamic legal services can create greater accessibility for the community but pose challenges, such as overlapping with traditional authorities. The principle of *maslahat* must include holistic analysis that considers social,

economic, and spiritual benefits. Thus, modern technology can be an instrument that supports *the maqasid shariah* as a whole, without compromising the core principles of sharia. This approach ensures that Islamic law remains adaptive to changing times while preserving its fundamental values (Sulthon 2022).

The principle of *maslahat* in Islamic law requires a thorough evaluation of the benefits generated by an innovation, including AI technology. The validity of *maslahat* is measured based on its conformity with *maqasid sharia*, namely the goal of sharia to protect religion, life, mind, descendants, and property. According to Al-Ghazali, *maslahat* must bring tangible benefits to society without violating the basic principles of sharia. In the context of AI, ulama needs to evaluate whether this technology provided significant benefits, such as managing Islamic legal data or resolving disputes, without sacrificing ethical and moral values. *Maslahat* must be the basis for ensuring that technology supports the welfare of the community at large (Rohman 2019).

One of the criteria for the validity of *maslahat* is its relevance to the objectives of sharia (*maqasid shariah*). In the use of AI, the validity of *maslahat* can be tested through the contribution of technology to the protection of property (hifz al-*mal*) and reason (*hifz al-aql*). For example, AI can be used to analyze inheritance data or fatwas, which speeds up the Islamic legal process and reduces the potential for human error. Ulama must also consider the potential for *mafsadah* (harm), such as violation of privacy or excessive dependence on technology. A comprehensive *maslahat* evaluation included an analysis of benefits and risks so that decisions about using AI remain within the corridor of sharia (Quthny & Hariati 2019).

The validity of *maslahat* in using AI can also be seen from its impact on social justice. As a technology that can provide wider access to Islamic law, AI has the potential to create equality in legal services. Justice is one of the core values in Islam that must be realized through benefits. Therefore, AI used to provide online fatwas or sharia legal consultations can be considered valid if this technology expands the accessibility of law to all groups, including those who do not have the economic or geographic resources to access ulama directly. Thus, AI contributes to achieving sustainable *maslahat* (Rohman 2019).

In addition, the validity of *maslahat* is also influenced by the process of supervision and accountability in the use of AI. This technology must be monitored to ensure that the algorithms used are not biased or contrary to sharia values. Ulama and technologists must work together to develop sharia standards for using AI. This approach will ensure that AI supports, not replaces, traditional authority in Islamic law. This process underscores the importance of *maslahat* as a monitoring mechanism to keep technology relevant, fair, and by sharia objectives (Quthny & Hariati 2019).

An example of AI in calculating *zakat* and distributing inheritances can be seen in platforms that use AI algorithms to automate the process based on individual financial data and Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). For instance, an AI system can analyze users' bank accounts, investments, gold holdings, business inventory, and liabilities to determine whether their wealth exceeds the *nisab* threshold and calculate the exact *zakat* amount due. In inheritance distribution, AI tools can process family relationship data and apply the specific rules of *Faraid* or Islamic inheritance law to allocate shares accurately to each heir, reducing the risk of miscalculation and legal disputes. These AI-driven processes can also generate reports and documentation that comply with sharia requirements, facilitating easier and fairer financial management in Muslim communities.

One application that exemplifies this is FaraidCalc, a digital tool designed to help Muslims compute inheritance shares according to Islamic law. While not fully AI-powered in earlier versions, newer developments have begun integrating AI features that allow for voice input, dynamic scenario analysis, and error-checking against classical fiqh rulings. Similarly, platforms like Zakatify and Zakat Calculator by IslamicFinder incorporate intelligent algorithms to assist users in calculating their *zakat* obligations, factoring in diverse assets and fluctuating market values. These applications are early models for integrating AI into religious financial obligations, combining automation with religious compliance.

The Opportunities for AI Integration in the Ijtihad Process

The integration of AI in the ijtihad process presents an opportunity to increase efficiency in analyzing sources of Islamic law. AI can process data from the al-Qur'an, Hadith, and classical fiqh books quickly, allowing ulama to obtain relevant results in a short time. For example, by AI-based search algorithms, ulama can search through legal texts more easily, thereby shortening the time to make legal decisions. Efficiency is one aspect of *maslahat* that supports the achievement of *maqasid shariah*. In this context, AI has become an important tool for dealing with the increasingly complex legal needs of the digital era (Malik 2024).

AI can expand global community access to Islamic law. Through an AI-based digital platform, people can easily access guidance or information on sharia law without being hindered by geographical constraints or the availability of ulama. This technology allowed ulama to distribute fatwas widely, creating an inclusive and equitable knowledge network. Accessibility of law is one form of benefit that can increase people's understanding of sharia. With AI, Muslims worldwide can receive legal guidance that suits their local needs without having to seek direct consultation (Hakim & Azizi 2023).

Another opportunity of using AI is its ability to ensure consistency between new and existing fatwas. AI technology can compare previous legal decisions with the case under consideration, helping clerics avoid contradictions in issuing fatwas. Consistency in Islamic law is critical to maintaining people's trust in sharia authorities. With AI, the ijtihad process can be based on systematic historical data analysis, ensuring that decisions align with the *maslahat mursalah* principle (Hakim & Azizi 2023).

AI also provided opportunities to analyze big data. This allowed ulama to conduct more fact-based legal ijtihad. This technology can identify patterns and trends in legal issues, providing ulama with deeper insights. For example, big data can map the legal issues that frequently arise in a particular community, helping ulama prioritize more relevant *maslahat*. Fact-based decision-making is an essential element of modern Islamic law, which can be strengthened by integrating technologies such as AI (Karimullah 2023).

This technology makes it easier to manage information and prepare legal recommendations, but it still requires a deep understanding from ulama to implement sharia. The authority of the ulama remains at the heart of the Islamic legal system, while technology only acts as a tool. With the right collaboration between ulama and technologists, AI can be used to empower in responding to contemporary legal challenges without reducing their authority (Rahman et al. 2024).

The integration of ulama and AI enables to production of fatwas with more incredible speed and accuracy. The technology can filter relevant information from various legal sources, and ulama focuses on key aspects in particular cases. This is relevant to the principle of *maslahat mursalah*, which emphasizes the importance of accuracy in meeting the community's needs. Modern technology can reduce the time required for research so that they can respond more quickly to legal questions from the community (Rahman et al., 2024).

With its analytical capabilities, AI can assist in managing legal and administrative data, such as case documentation, fatwa archives, and preparing legal recommendations. This technology allows ulama to focus more on the substantial aspects of the ijtihad process. Technology that reduces administrative burdens can support the *maslahat* by creating a more efficient and organized ijtihad or fatwa system (Malik 2024).

The integration of AI in ijtihad allows Islamic law to remain relevant to the challenges of the modern era while realizing *maslahat mursalah*. This technology supports the implementation of sharia principles more efficiently, inclusively, and data-driven. However, the implementation of AI must be monitored to ensure that this technology does not violate the core values of sharia. *Maslahat* must be the primary criterion in evaluating the application of technology in Islamic law so that this innovation brings maximum benefits to the community.

The Challenge of AI Integration in Ijtihad Process: A Testing the Maslahat Aspect

One of the main challenges in integrating AI into the ijtihad process is ensuring the validity of data sources used by an AI system. As a data-dependent tool, AI requires authentic and credible sources from the al-Quran, Hadith, ijma', and *fiqh* books to produce legal recommendations by sharia. If the data used is not verified, the results provided by AI can be misleading or even contradict the principles of Islamic law. Data validity is an important element in determining *maslahat* because errors in data will undermine the expected benefits of technology. Therefore, ulama and technology experts must work together to build a reliable Islamic law database with sharia standards (Malik 2024).

Social, cultural, and spiritual contexts are often critical elements in the ijtihad process. Despite its advanced analytical capabilities, AI does not understand the spiritual values or cultural contexts that underlie Islamic law. For example, applying Islamic law in a complex urban society may require a different approach than in traditional society. Ijtihad relied on logic and required a deep understanding of social context. AI's inability to understand these dimensions poses a significant obstacle to ensuring that the resulting legal ijtihad remains relevant and by the principles of *maslahah* (Malik 2024).

Integrating AI in ijtihad also poses ethical challenges, especially regarding the risk of distortion and manipulation of fatwas by AI systems. If AI algorithms are designed without considering sharia principles or are used for specific interests, the results can damage the community's trust in Islamic law. For example, biased algorithms can prefer specific interpretations of the law that are not in line with the *maqasid shariah*. *Maslahat*, in Islamic law, must consider ethical aspects, including in developing and implementing technology. Therefore, strict supervision in the use of AI is needed to ensure that this technology is not misused (Rahman et al. 2024).

The use of AI in the ijtihad process can potentially create conflict with the tradition and authority of the ulama. In the Islamic legal system, ulama has a central role as guardians of the sharia and issuers of fatwas. The integration of technologies such as AI can be seen as a threat to this authority if not managed carefully. Harmony between technology and the authority of ulama is essential to maintaining the legitimacy of Islamic law. Therefore, AI should be positioned as a tool, not a substitute, in the ijtihad process. This approach ensures that ulama retains complete control over the interpretation of the law while AI supports them by providing relevant data and analysis (Karimullah 2023).

In addition to context limitations, AI cannot understand the spiritual dimension at the heart of Islamic law. Ijtihad often involves the spiritual intuition of ulama that cannot be replicated by technology. For example, decisions on specific moral issues may require understanding profound spiritual implications. *Maslahat* includes material aspects and moral and spiritual values that are difficult to measure quantitatively. Therefore, AI can only be a supporting tool that provides information, while the spiritual aspect remains the exclusive domain of the ulama (Malik 2024).

Over-reliance on AI technology can also be a challenge in ijtihad process. If the ulama relies too much on AI to make decisions, there is a risk of weakening the intellectual capacity of the ulama in analyzing legal issues. Ijtihad must remain a human process based on in-depth knowledge of shariah. Technology should only function to support ulama, not as a substitute that reduces the importance of human expertise in Islamic law (Malik 2024).

Oversight and accountability are essential to ensure that AI is used ethically in the ijtihad process. Without adequate oversight, this technology can produce decisions that are not by sharia or even detrimental to society. *Maslahat* must include a monitoring mechanism that ensures the technology is used by the principles of the sharia. This monitoring involves collaboration between ulama, technology experts, and regulatory bodies to ensure that AI operates within an appropriate framework (Rahman et al. 2024).

To overcome these challenges, efforts are needed to create harmony between technology and sharia. AI must be designed and implemented with *maqasid shariah* in mind so that this technology not only supports the people's welfare but also respects the traditional values in

Islamic law. Technology integration into Islamic law must be done carefully to ensure that *maslahah* remains the primary focus. With a careful approach, AI can strengthen the Islamic legal system without undermining its core values (Karimullah 2023).

The Maslahat Mursalah Approach to AI Optimization in Contemporary Ijtihad Process

The *maslahat mursalah* approach in optimizing AI begins with developing an AI system based on *maqasid shariah*. It aimed to protect the five primary needs of humanity: religion, life, reason, descendants, and property. An AI system designed with this approach must ensure that every ijtihad produced by technology is not only by the principles of Islamic law but also creates justice and welfare for the people. The principle of justice is a core element of Islamic law and must be the foundation in developing a sharia-based technology system. With algorithms that prioritize the values of *maqasid shariah*, AI can be a tool that supports the authority of ulama in producing relevant and valuable fatwas (Malik 2024).

Optimizing AI in contemporary ijtihad requires collaboration between ulama and technologists to create ethical and Sharia-compliant algorithms. Ulama has in-depth knowledge of Islamic law, while technologists have expertise designing algorithm-based systems. This collaboration ensures that AI systems are technically accurate and adhere to Islamic ethical values. This collaborative approach can create harmony between tradition and innovation, allowing AI to support the ijtihad process without diminishing the ulama authority. This approach also ensures that technology is not used for specific interests that can harm the public interest (Sidqi et al. 2024).

Increasing technological understanding among ulama is an important step in optimizing AI for ijtihad. Technology education in sharia studies helps ulama understand AI's potential, limitations, and ethical implications. With this understanding, ulama can be more critical in using technology to support legal decisions. Technological literacy is key in ensuring that ulama remains relevant in the digital age. Technology training programs for ulama can include understanding algorithms, big data, and AI-based legal interpretation or ijtihad systems. Thus, ulama can use technology wisely to support the community's interests.

Oversight and accountability are essential in ensuring that the principles of *maslahah* use AI. AI designed without supervision can produce decisions that are contrary to sharia values. Therefore, it is necessary to form a supervisory body consisting of ulama and technology experts to oversee the development and implementation of AI. This supervision ensures compliance with sharia and builds public trust in technology. This supervisory body is also tasked with auditing the algorithms used and evaluating their impact on the *maslahah* of the community so that technology remains within a safe and ethical corridor (Quthny & Hariati 2019).

The application of *maslahat mursalah* in AI requires the development of clear and measurable sharia standards. These standards include ethical criteria, data validity, and algorithms' conformity to *maqasid shariah* principles. With these standards, AI systems can be used in ijtihad without violating the core values of Islamic law. Strong Sharia standards ensure that technological innovation remains under control and does not cause *mafsadah* (loss) that can damage the welfare of the community.

Although AI has great potential to support ijtihad, this technology should not replace the role of ulama as the leading authority in Islamic law. AI should be positioned to provide information and analysis, while ulama remains the ones who decide the law. Harmony between technology and the authority of ulma is key to maintaining the legitimacy of Islamic law in the modern era. With this approach, ulama can use technology to speed up the ijtihad process without losing their traditional authority (Malik 2024).

AI can be used to increase transparency and consistency in ijtihad process. With its deep data analysis capabilities, AI can ensure that new fatwas are consistent with previous fatwas, reducing the potential for contradictions. The technology can also help ulama document the ijtihad process transparently, allowing the public to understand the legal basis for resulting

rulings. Transparency is essential in building public trust in Islamic law, which the integration of AI can support (Sidqi et al. 2023).

The *maslahat mursalah* approach in optimizing AI must be holistic, encompassing technical, ethical, and spiritual aspects. By combining modern technology with the principles of *maqasid shariah*, AI can become a tool that supports the achievement of community *maslahat* sustainably. The integration of technology must always consider its impact on society as a whole so that its benefits are not only temporary but also contribute in the long term. With this approach, AI can become an instrument supporting Islamic law's relevance in the digital era.

To conclude, the *maslahat mursalah* approach guided the integration of AI into the contemporary ijtihad process by ensuring that technology is used to create benefits by the *maqasid shariah.* AI has great potential to support the achievement of public *maslahat* through big data analysis, increased efficiency of decision-making, and broad access to Islamic law. However, AI must be positioned as a tool, not a substitute for the authority of ulama, while still adhering to sharia principles.

Despite offering significant opportunities, AI integration also presents ethical challenges, such as the validity of data sources, contextual limitations in understanding spiritual values, and the risk of technological manipulation. Collaboration between ulama and technology experts, technology education in sharia studies, and establishing a supervisory body are needed to overcome this. With a holistic, *maslahat*-based approach, AI can effectively support ijtihad without neglecting the core values and authority of Islamic law.

Based on that conclusion, the future outlook of AI integration in Islamic law is promising as technology increasingly intersects with religious governance. AI is expected to enhance the ijtihad process by efficiently analyzing complex legal cases. Clear governance is needed to align with *maslahat mursalah* and *maqasid shariah*, covering ethical standards, transparent audits, and sharia-based compliance. Islamic universities must integrate AI literacy and digital ethics into their curricula. Regulatory bodies are also vital to oversee AI use in fatwa and ijtihad.

Therefore, the ethical use of AI in sharia must be rooted in a deep commitment to preserving Islamic law's sanctity, integrity, and authority. Ensuring ethical AI use demands rigorous validation, transparency, and adherence to sharia principles at every level of technological application. Future research should focus on developing sharia-compliant AI frameworks, exploring AI's role in dynamic fatwa formulation, and evaluating its long-term impact on religious authority and community trust.

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