

Challenges of Hedonism Culture in Realising the Maqasid Syariah

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Abstract

This research aims to identify the challenges of appreciating the Maqasid Syariah that stem from the culture of hedonism. The methodology used is library research. Maqasid Syariah aims to preserve religion, intellect, soul or life, lineage and dignity, as well as property. Various challenges persist in realising the Maqasid Syariah. Among them stem from the spread of hedonism culture in society. This culture emphasises the pleasures of life based on the determination of the mind. It has become the lifeblood of individuals concerned with pleasure alone without caring about other more important aspects of their lives. Humans who fall into this world of hedonism are only deified by lust alone. The days they live are only to pursue and add to the world's wealth, boast of rank and power, indulge lust, entertain and revel. Among the forms of this cultural phenomenon are transcendental entertainment, free association, free sex, alcohol, drugs, hanging out, and street thugs. The goal of realising the Maqasid Syariah will not be achieved as long as human life is separated from noble moral, ethical, and spiritual values.

Keywords: Culture of Hedonism, Phenomenon, Challenge, Realisation, Maqasid Syariah

Introduction

Maqasid Syariah aims to preserve the benefits and realise the good for humankind as well as reject harm and prevent them from wrong in this world and the hereafter. It aims to preserve religion, soul or life, intellect, lineage and dignity, as well as property. However, there are various challenges in realising the Maqasid Syariah. The culture of hedonism is one of the challenges that hinder the realisation of the Maqasid Syariah today. Factors in the contagion of the phenomenon of cultural hedonism are due to the ignorance of some Muslims, the stubbornness of some Muslims in accepting the law of Allah and His Messenger, the influence of the Western way of life through the mass media, local customs, weaknesses in the law, and the like (Wahab, 2011).

Hedonism Culture

Hedonism is a pattern of thinking that states that maximising pleasure is the best and most desirable thing in human life in this world. The word hedonism is defined as a holding or view of life that emphasises the pleasure or enjoyment of life (*Kamus Dewan*, 2010). The Oxford English Dictionary defines hedonism as an ethical doctrine or theory that states that pleasure is the highest level of goodness or the ultimate goal of an action (Simpson & Weiner, 1989). Hedonism is also defined as the satisfaction of taste and enjoyment which is a measure of the behaviour of a good deed (Din et al., 1990). Hedonism values goodness based only on pleasure alone. Moral values are considered to have similarities with the values of virtue acquired in this culture of hedonism (Ayub, 1994). Adherents of this ideology are known as hedonists and the nature of this group that is concerned with pleasure is referred to as hedonistic (*Kamus Dewan*, 2010).

Syed Qutb elaborates on the definition of hedonism through the nature and phenomena of human life, among which worldly life is a pleasure that enchants humankind (Qutb, 2009), human beings are in a state of ignorance encompassing aspects of life concepts, beliefs and beliefs, customs and habits, sources of art and literature lessons, rules and laws, Islamic philosophy, and Islamic thought (Qutb, 1980), the value of worldly life activities is only an activity game and entertainment, the human soul always loves and prioritises the life of the world, human beings are concerned with pleasure and luxury as well as enslaving themselves to other than Allah (Qutb, 2009).

Hedonists are constantly striving to improve their respective lifestyles to maximise the principles of joy and enjoyment in life (Don, 2000). This principle is based on the doctrines of philosophy and psychology which explain that all human behaviour or conduct is based on the pursuit of happiness. Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) was of the view that the principle of hedonism has to do with the instinct that associates human beings with the factors of pain and joy. Only this factor will influence humans in an action that shows what must be done and determines an action that should be done (*Ensiklopedia Malaysiana*, 1996).

Hedonism is part of secularism. The basic word of secularism is secular, which means the world. It is an ideology that separates the relationship between religion and the world (Din et al., 1990), an ideology in the form of doctrines, stances, etc., that rejects religious values in human social life (*Kamus Dewan*, 2010). According to Nasr (1967), secularism is humane, something that originates from human beings. Competition between God and man became its main policy and goal. This definition of secularism is reinforced by al-Attas (1993) which is the liberation of human beings from religious and metaphysical elements.

According to Zaid (1997), secularism aims to separate religion totally from society and open up opportunities to develop education without religious characteristics, a political system that contradicts the sharia, and a usury-based economic system. In addition, it also aims to keep the elements of spirituality, revelation, supernatural matters, as well as matters that have a relationship with religion, such as morals, beliefs, and faith, away from human thought. Thus, a secular society is a society that has aspects of social life that are free from the domination of religious symbols and institutions. This means that the power and influence of religion are diminishing in the life of the community.

Hedonism prioritises pleasure based on the determination of the mind. This phenomenon meets the desires and goals of secularism which seeks to liberate humankind from the elements of divinity and religion. Through this culture, the secularism goals of certain parties can be achieved. The culture of hedonism which was originally a stream, has turned into part

of the way of life of modern society. It has become the lifeblood of individuals concerned with pleasure alone without caring about other more important aspects of their lives. They are also encouraged to do something pleasant and avoid harmful things. Humans who fall into this world of hedonism are only deified by lust alone. The days they live are only for the purpose of pursuing and adding to the wealth of the world, boasting of rank and power, satisfying lust, entertaining and indulging until they forget the true nature of the purpose for which Allah created them, namely as His servants and caliphs on this earth. In addition, they also neglect to perform their responsibilities as family members or community members (Hamzah, 2013).

Maqasid Syariah

Maqasid Syariah means the objectives or wisdom that are to be maintained and realised by the Pensiariat, namely Allah, in setting His laws for the good of His servants. Maqasid Syariah is the objectives that are caused by it, so the hukum-hakam is prescribed in order to realise the objectives of those objectives. The virtues make the servants happy in this world and the hereafter, whether those objectives are obtained through the production of benefits or the rejection of harm (Wahab, 2011).

Hashim (2018) defines Maqasid Syariah as the intent or purpose of Islamic law. He also talked about the goal of giving blessings to the universe through obedience to the Allah's rules. The goal of Maqasid Syariah, as emphasised by him is to provide benefits to all human beings.

Noor, Haron and Alias (2018) discuss Maqasid Syariah as an important element that need to be taken into account in determining some syarak laws to address current problems and issues. The role of Maqasid Syariah and its application can be applied in the development system of an Islamic country to ensure the formulation of policies and policies related to social, economic and political in line with Islamic demands.

According to Mokhtar (2018), the Maqasid Syariah that is to be achieved must be a pillar of Islamic law and teachings. Mujtahids need to really understand the Maqasid Syariah during the process of ijihad and the issuance of fatwas. This article also outlines some of the principles of Maqasid Syariah, which prove its importance in setting fatwas today.

The purpose of the enactment of God's laws includes five things:

a. Preserving Religion

Religion is a key element to human beings. It is one of the characteristics that can distinguish between humans and animals. Security and freedom of religion are guaranteed and there is no coercion in religion (Harun, 1996). In order to preserve the religion, Islam forbids all things that can threaten the religion, such as disbelief, polytheism, hypocrisy, apostasy, etc. (Wahab, 2011).

The words of Allah in surah al-Tahrim, 66: 6, which means:

O you who believe! Protect yourself and your family from the fire of hell whose fuel is man and stone, its guardian angels are rough and hard angels, who are not disobedient to Allah to what He commanded them and always do what He commanded.

According to Syed Qutb (2009), the responsibility of a Mukmin towards himself and his family is heavy and daunting. In the hereafter, he and his family are exposed to the fires of hell. Therefore, he has a duty to protect himself and his family from the hell that awaits him there, which is a hell that blazes so terrible and great. As-Suyuthi and al-Mahalli (t.t.) explained that in this verse, there is a threat for the believers not to apostatise, and also, this verse is a threat for the hypocrites, that is those who profess faith verbally but their hearts are still infidels.

b. Preserving the Soul or Life

Islam protects human life and is always concerned about the fundamental rights of others. Every individual has the right to live under the auspices of Islam, be guaranteed freedom of thought, opinion, and residency (Mokhtar & Hussain, 2007). In order to realise the preservation of the soul or life, Islam forbids any act that can threaten oneself, the soul or the life of a person, whether oneself or others (Wahab, 2011). All creatures, including humans, are endowed by God with life. Life is society's right, and without God's permission, no one has the right to challenge this right.

This is stated in surah al-Hijr, 15:23, meaning:

And verily, We give life and cause death, and We are the inheritors.

This verse explains that life and death are in the hands of God and God is the heir afterlife. Allah is Aware of all those He has appointed as those whose death is hastened and then they are killed immediately, and all those He has appointed as those whose death is postponed and then their death is delayed. In the end, it is Allah who will gather them all and to Him return all of them (Qutb, 2009). Indeed, only Allah is omnipotent to give life to creatures that were, in the beginning, non-existent and inanimate. He is also the one who will take their lives at His appointed time. Allah is the inheritor of the earth and humankind on it, and to Him, they will be returned. Therefore, all this is not difficult for Him because He knows all the affairs of the previous human beings and the later human beings.

c. Preserving the Intellect

The intellect is a precious gift of God to human beings. The presence of intellect, distinguishes human beings from other creatures of God. The intellect is a determinant of an individual's responsibility to religion, self, family, society, and country (Mokhtar & Hussain, 2007). In preserving the mind, Islam forbids any action that can threaten one's mind either against oneself or others such as involvement with alcohol, drugs, imaginary glue, imaginary pills, and the like (Wahab, 2011).

Allah says in surah al-Ma'idah, 5:90, which means:

O you who believe! Indeed liquor, gambling, sacrificing to idols and casting lots with arrows are abominable acts and include the deeds of the devil. So stay away from them so that you may prosper.

Alcohol, gambling, idols and arrows are characteristics of ignorant life and are a tradition that is deeply rooted in ignorant society. It is all a bundle of evil that has a deep connection in terms of its practices and position as a characteristic and tradition of the society. They drank alcohol excessively and made it a boastful activity in drinking parties, where they competed and raced to drink a lot. Usually, the drinking ceremony was accompanied by the sacrifice of a slaughtered animal. For victims slaughtered at liquor ceremonies and similar social ceremonies, gambling was held using arrows to determine the reward for distributing the sacrificial meat. Everyone will get his reward according to the rate determined by his arrow (Qutb, 2009).

d. Preserving Lineage and Dignity

In preserving the offspring, Islam forbids anything that can harm the offspring either directly or indirectly, such as adultery, sodomy, lesbianism, pornography, free association, viewing illicit things, exposing the aurat, shaking hands, touching, hugging, etc. between men and women who are not mahrams (Wahab, 2011). Islam demands preserving lineage, dignity, and

honour. Both parents must preserve their offspring by ensuring that the children get a perfect education with their dignity and honour preserved from being trapped in a lowly valley.

Among the verses of the Quran that discuss the question of descent and dignity is the word of Allah in surah al-Nur, 24: 30-31, meaning:

Say to the believing men, that they guard their eyes and guard their private parts, that is purer, for them. Surely Allah is Aware of what they do. And say to the believing women, that they guard their looks, and guard their private parts, and do not reveal their ornaments (auratnya), except what is usually visible. And let them cover their breasts with a veil...

Qutb (2009) explains that restraining the eyes from looking at women from men's side is a self-civilisation and an effort to overcome the desire to see the beautiful parts of a woman's face and body. It is also an attempt to close the first window of the windows of lust and prevent the arrival of the poisonous arrow of lust. Preservation of the genitals from adultery is a natural result of the practice of restraining the illicit gaze, or it is a further step to strengthen the control of desire and tighten vigilance to overcome lustful desires at an early stage. Next, Basmih (1990) argues that in this verse, Allah commands Muslim men and women to restrict their views from seeing what is haram and guard honour against committing adultery. Muslim women are also prohibited from exposing their aurat to foreign men, except their faces and palms.

e. Preserving Wealth

Property is an important element in human life. In addition, it is also a necessity in upholding the syiar and fulfilling the demands of Islam. Thus, Islam encourages its ummah to carry out property search activities as long as the method is based on the rules and guidelines of Islamic law. In preserving property, Islam forbids any harmful act, destroys or wastes property such as robbing, stealing, snatching, wasting, etc. (Wahab, 2011).

Islam also explains the method of wealth management as Allah says in surah al-Isra', 17: 26-27, which means:

And give their rights to the close relatives, also to the poor and the wayfarers, and do not squander your wealth extravagantly . Lo! The extravagant are the brethren of the devils, and the devils are ungrateful to their Lord.

The right of relatives is to strengthen the bond of friendship, be friendly, and help anyone who needs help. The poor and travellers are also entitled to assistance (Basmih, 1990). The Quran makes the relatives, the poor, and the homeless travellers have a right over the Muslims that must be fulfilled by extending assistance to them. The help is not a gift of generosity from one to another, but is a right that is obligatory by God and is connected with the obligation to worship and deify Him. It is an obligation that must be fulfilled in order to abdicate his responsibilities and to connect the love between him and the recipient. The Quran also forbids the act of waste which is spending spent in the wrong way. People who waste are considered brothers of the devil because they spend their wealth on the path of wickedness, evil, vice (Qutb, 2009), misleading people and inciting them to rebel against God (Basmih, 1990).

The Cultural Phenomenon of Hedonism and Its Challenges to the Maqasid Syariah

The majority of members of the strata of society, regardless of age and status, are influenced by a culture of hedonism. There are various forms or cultural patterns of hedonism in the life of society. However, researchers choose to discuss only some cultural forms of hedonism. The

justification for selecting the following patterns is because there are characteristics of hedonists in this phenomenon, such as hard-heartedness, rejecting the truth, committing immorality, and the like (Don, 2000). Furthermore, these forms influence society more than other forms. This cultural phenomenon of hedonism is a challenge in realising the Maqasid Syariah. The challenges are:

a. The Challenge of Preserving Religion

Entertainment is needed, but extreme and excessive entertainment is illegal. Islam forbids its ummah to be excessive in a matter even in matters of worship, especially in matters of entertainment and spending time with it even though the original law is a must (al-Qaradawi, 1993). The question is that today many go beyond the concept of entertainment just to fulfil human nature. Celebrations and festivities seem incomplete without extreme entertainment events. Entertainment becomes a community's way of life when the organisers get the freedom to organise parties, festivals, concerts, and other entertainment programs. Entertainment-type shows, programs, and magazines increase from time to time as they receive response from the public compared to current scientific, religious, and informational plans and programs.

The community is highlighted with a variety of unusual and mesmerising entertainment culture patterns that make them attracted to the entertainment style of today's reality. They may not be aware that entertainment beyond the boundaries will harm personal and mental formation, especially of young people and children. Such entertainment also makes society negligent and careless to their duties and responsibilities (Don, 2000). Many elements of Western culture have permeated into Asian and Islamic cultures. Its influence permeates various cultures, especially entertainment. Music, singing, movies, cartoons, and comics from the West have successfully penetrated today's world market. Aspects of Western culture are disseminated through these entertainment channels. Noisy music rhythms such as rock n roll and heavy metal, negative ways and lifestyles of Western performers such as involvement with drugs, vandalism, promiscuous sex, and the like are being followed by the younger generation (Aros et al., 2001).

Apart from that, Black Metal, one of the issues involving the perversion of faith, is spreading among the community, especially among teenagers. It is one of the trends of music imported from the West to be infiltrated into Eastern culture. The motive of this harmful and aggressive form of music is to spread and develop ideologies that are at odds with oriental values. Black Metal activities carried out individually or in groups include wearing a cross upside down, wearing a T-Shirt, bracelets, tattoos, writing, and paintings depicting a goat's head, a symbol of sharp nails, and a skull (Don & Ali, 2008).

b. The Challenge of Preserving a Soul or Life

In this era of globalisation, people's lifestyles are also changing. Society is now beginning to tend to the overly free association between men and women who are not mahrams whether between engaged couples, lovers or regular friends. Free association without restrictions leads to various social problems such as moral decay, adultery, illegitimate childbirth, murder and abandonment of babies, spread of various chronic diseases, many unmarried women and men, family breakdown, and so on.

Symptoms of street gangsterism have also existed in Malaysia for a long time, but this activity became more widespread by the 1990s. Most street thugs live in busy urban areas such as Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Ipoh, and Johor Bahru (Daud, 2002). Most street thugs are teenagers,

and they engage in illegal racing, whether cars or motorcycles, to achieve the pleasure and satisfaction of life. Usually, the places they target to play and race are in big cities and highways (Don, 2000).

The motorcycles used by these street thugs do not have a good standard as they have been modified. Some motorcyclists do not have a license or ride a stolen motorcycle. Public hatred towards this street gang is increasing day by day. This is because they act wildly on the road without thinking and caring about the public's safety. They become overly aggressive when on the road as if not appreciating their own lives. Dangerous and alarming actions are performed for fun and riding at speeds that are not suitable for use on the road. Although they had witnessed their friends involved in road accidents, the tragedy did not give them the slightest awareness (<http://www.tonton.com.my>).

This race is known as an illegal race because its conduct does not get permission from the authorities and is done in the wrong place. This illegal race can result in the rider being injured or his life being pawned in vain. In fact, it endangers the lives of others. This is contrary to the teachings of Islam because Islam obliges its followers to maintain their safety from danger and do things that are useless and harmful.

c. The Challenge of Preserving the Common Sense

Drinking alcohol or any beverage other than intoxicating alcohol such as tuak, samsu, tapai water, and the like is prohibited by Islam. However, in this modern age, a few Muslims make this liquor their usual drink. Alcohol causes humans to lose the function of common sense. As a result, various evils and heinous acts occur in human life. For young people, alcohol is one of the three elements of the pleasures of life apart from gambling and women. With these three elements of pleasure coupled with the nature of courage, the individual is a "great youth". Thus, young people feel proud when they manage to combine all these pleasures and be proud of other friends. Sometimes, these people engage in vices and discord to get money to spend on pleasures, and entertainment in daily life (Ali, 1993).

A prohibition in Islam is based on the element of harm. Something harmful to individuals and society is haram, even though it is not specifically stated in the text of the Quran or hadith. Alcohol harms an individual whether it is religion, mind, body, soul, and property. It also harmed his family when the drunkard could no longer perform his responsibilities to his children and wife. In addition, it also harms society with the occurrence of moral decay, loss of property, spread of disease, etc., which results in destruction (al-Qaradawi, 1993).

The same goes for drug abuse which is a major problem in the country. The effect is the spread of various social symptoms such as stealing, snatching, killing, and so on. In addition, there is the spread of various types of dangerous diseases such as AIDS, HIV, hepatitis, and other infectious diseases. Drug addiction statistics released by the National Drug Information System (BIONADI) show that during 2020, a total of 20,643 addicts were detected and showed a decrease of 20.8% compared to last year, which was a total of 26,080 people. They consisted of 13,879 (67.2%) new addicts, which decreased of 20.7% compared to 17,506 people for the same period last year. In contrast, repeat addicts were 6,764 people (32.8%), a decrease of 21.1% compared to the previous year, which was a total of 8,574 people (<http://www.adk.gov.my/>).

Ecstasy pill abuse is also on the rise. It is heavily billed during large-scale party celebrations such as entertainment centres, parties, nightclubs, and the like. The main factor in the increase in pill addiction among Muslims is the weakness of faith, piety, and charity. However, Islam instructs its followers always to preserve religion, life, soul, intellect, property, dignity,

and lineage (Daud, 2002). While the increase in addiction to these pills among non-Muslims may be due to stress, seeking pleasure, the influence of friends, and others.

d. The Challenge of Preserving Descendants

According to the Islamic perspective, meetings between men and women are allowed and even demanded if the meeting is geared towards noble goals such as seeking knowledge, implementing good programs, jihad, and matters that require the mobilisation of energy between the two to plan, give views and implementation. However, Islam stipulates that cooperation must always be within the limits of Islamic law. Among them are both sides keeping their eyes open, women wearing clothes outlined by sharia and maintaining manners, refraining from using something that could seduce someone, refraining from sitting alone without being with her mahram, and the meeting is for a second demanding affair both present together (al-Qaradawi, 1993).

God created men with strength and has a tendency towards women. In contrast, women are created to have a tendency towards men with weakness and tenderness. Thus, when intercourse occurs between men and women, it will have adverse effects due to the souls inducing evil, lust becoming blind and deaf, and the devil enjoining wickedness (Ibn Taimiyyah et al., 2006). God not only forbids His servants from committing adultery, but all forms of acts that lead to adultery must also be avoided. This prohibition is intended to preserve the dignity and progeny of humankind from being defiled and trapped into the valley of disobedience. When people disobey God's command, according to the lusts and persuasions of the devil, then their pure dignity is lost, and an illegitimate child is born.

Unrestricted intercourse leads to free sex acts. Those involved in this act regard sex as a pleasure, a pride, and a current trend. This act of free sex not only involves sexual intercourse between men and women but also spreads to unnatural sex such as homosexuality. Apart from the factors of free association and individual attitudes towards sex, several other factors drive society to engage with these symptoms. Among them are the influence of friends, phonographic mass media, entertainment centres, troubled families, ease of obtaining contraceptives, ease of place to have sex, and lack of religious education (Awang, 1996).

Islam recognises the need for lust as part of human nature. Man is supposed to be the master of his body and not his slave. They should use their will and not just according to their feelings or heart desires. When human beings are able to control themselves, they will respond to the needs of the body, and enjoy the pleasures of life within the limits that God has set upon them (Qutb, 1983). Islam also allows sex between men and women, but the recognition of this relationship must be channelled through a valid marriage contract. It is a marriage that legalises sex. Sexual intercourse contrary to the will of God is unlawful and sinful. Even the initial steps that lead to such a relationship are prohibited.

e. The Challenge of Preserving Property

Hanging out or relaxing in public places without any specific purpose is a damaging practice in society. Places that focus on hanging out activities are shopping malls, entertainment centres, bus stations, restaurants, coffee shops, recreational parks, and others. These places are preferred because they are comfortable and various facilities are available. The people who hang out today involve the old and the young. In general, those who hang out tend towards entertainment and pleasure compared to other aspects (Don, 2000). This group claims that the pleasure of hanging out is to witness all the greatness available in cities,

ranging from stores that sell a variety of fashion clothing to stalls that sell drugs on the sidewalk (Stapa, 1994).

Factors that drive the prevalence of this hanging out include the physical attractiveness of attractive public places, less comfortable living space, selfishness, lack of desire to act productively (Don, 2000), the influence of the mass media, desire for freedom absolute, in need of entertainment, imitative attitude (Rahim, 1999), and others. Islam instructs its people to make the best use of time instead of wasting time doing unprofitable activities. As a result, they belong to the group of losers as Allah says in surah al-`Asr, 103: 1-3 which means: For the sake of time. Lo! Mankind is in loss save those who believe and do good works, and admonish one another for righteousness, and admonish one another for patience.

Based on the above verse, Ibn Kathir (1998) and Basmih (1990) in their tafsir describe that human beings are generally in loss and misfortune except those who believe and do good deeds, always be instructed with the truth covering aspects of belief, words, and deeds as well as advising one another patiently in carrying out the demands and commands of God and abandoning His prohibitions.

Loss means loss of capital and the capital of an individual is his age. Thus, all human beings are not spared from suffering losses because every passing second is closely related to their age. If every second of their age is allotted to vices or things that should be, surely they are at a loss because that age is spent on things that are not beneficial. To avoid loss, Islam encourages its people to do good deeds and preach the truth and patience (Ibn Kathir, 1998; Basmih, 1990).

Conclusion

The culture of hedonism is indeed challenging and has implications for realising the Maqasid Syariah. The Quran reveals a lot about this problem so that Muslims are vigilant and try to respond to it. In addition, the Quran also outlines guidelines to follow. When human beings are swept away by the culture of hedonism introduced by human beings especially Westerners, then this world is in chaos. The Maqasid Syariah, which aims to create benefits and repel harm in the life of humankind will fail with this cultural behaviour and phenomenon of hedonism. Therefore, all parties must work to prevent the spread of this culture of hedonism.

This study explores how the behaviour and cultural phenomena of hedonism become a challenge in realising the Maqasid Shariah in the lives of Muslims with reference to the views of scholars, mass media, and responsible organisational reports. These findings clearly show that Maqasid Shariah is a parameter in harmonising human life because its legislation aims to prevent human beings from committing immorality and rebellion against God. However, the findings reveals that the cultural treatment of hedonism has negative implications in preserving religion, life, property, intellect, and human dignity. Therefore, all parties, especially the government, must strive to address the issues and implications of this culture of hedonism. This effort will be a milestone to realise the Maqasid Syariah. It is hoped that this study will be useful, especially for Muslims, on the dangers of cultural hedonism in religious life. Whilst many studies on the culture of hedonism have been done, this study adds to previous studies by focusing on the challenges in realising the Maqasid Shariah and upholding Islamic sharia. However, this study is limited to document analysis, further studies are recommended using questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis to obtain more detailed information.

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