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The Role of the Higher Objectives of Islamic Sharia (Maqasid Al-Sharia) in Developing Digital Services for Persons with Disabilities

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Abstract

This study examines the role of Maqasid al-Shari'ah, the higher objectives of Islamic law, in developing digital services for people of determination, amidst the rapid expansion of digital technology and smart societies. Digital services have become foundational across educational, healthcare, social, and economic sectors, necessitating digital environments that accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities to ensure equal access and independent, secure social participation. The research aims to clarify the relationship between Maqasid al-Shari'ah and the principles of digital inclusion by exploring how these objectives support the development of accessible digital frameworks. It analyzes the concept of Maqasid al-Shari'ah in promoting human welfare, alongside contemporary digital services and assistive technologies designed for individuals with disabilities. The findings indicate that shari'ah objectives, specifically the preservation of life, intellect, wealth, and human dignity, closely align with the goals of comprehensive digital transformation, as modern technology enhances quality of life, autonomy, and social integration for people of determination. The study demonstrates that advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence, smart applications, and assistive digital media, serve as effective tools for facilitating access to education, healthcare, government services, and financial systems. However, the paper identifies several challenges, such as suboptimal digital accessibility, high costs of assistive technologies, and a lack of institutional awareness regarding universal digital design. The study emphasizes the necessity of developing supportive policies and legislations for digital inclusion, while fostering collaboration among governmental, technical, and educational institutions to construct an equitable, sustainable digital environment aligned with humanitarian principles and Maqasid al-Shari'ah.

Keywords: Maqasid al-Sharia Digital Accessibility Persons with Disabilities Digital Transformation Assistive Technology

Introduction

Digital services represent a defining feature of contemporary technological transformation, with government, educational, and healthcare institutions increasingly relying on digital platforms to deliver essential services. While this shift has facilitated access to information and enhanced the general quality of life, the true utility of these services depends on their capacity to achieve digital inclusion across all social strata. This is particularly critical for people of determination, who frequently encounter multifaceted challenges when navigating digital environments. Consequently, there is an urgent need to design digital infrastructure that accommodates the specific needs of individuals with disabilities, ensuring equal opportunities for community participation and digital autonomy.

Within this framework, Islamic jurisprudence centers on the human being as the primary agent of development and stewardship on Earth, asserting the necessity of preserving human dignity and safeguarding individual rights without discrimination. Maqasid al-Shari'ah provides a comprehensive framework for maximizing human welfare and preventing harm by securing the five essential necessities: the preservation of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth. These overarching objectives establish an ethical and legislative baseline for structuring modern digital services, ensuring justice, equity, and the systematic removal of barriers for people of determination.

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence, smart applications, and assistive technologies introduces unprecedented opportunities to optimize services for individuals with disabilities in education, healthcare, civil transactions, and social communication. Contemporary literature indicates that accessible digital technologies enhance the independence of people of determination and facilitate their seamless integration into society, while significantly expanding their access to learning and employment opportunities. Recent intersections in Islamic and technological studies highlight a distinct convergence between the principles of digital inclusion and Maqasid al-Shari'ah, particularly regarding social justice, human dignity, and the mitigation of undue hardship. Scholars note that inclusive technology has become a contemporary instrument for realizing shari'ah objectives, empowering individuals with disabilities to exercise their rights equitably within the digital ecosystem. Accordingly, this study aims to articulate the role of Maqasid al-Shari'ah in developing digital services for people of determination, analyzing how these legal and ethical objectives can guide comprehensive digital transformation toward a more equitable and sustainable technological environment.

The Concept of Maqasid al-Shari'ah

Maqasid al-Shari'ah refers to the ultimate objectives, purposes, and wisdoms behind Islamic rulings, designed to secure human welfare in both mundane and spiritual spheres. Shari'ah legal philosophy aims to establish justice, mercy, and public interest while removing harm and hardship from society. Islamic legal theorists emphasize that jurisprudential rulings are systematically structured to realize overarching goals that maintain societal stability and defend fundamental human rights. The contemporary relevance of Maqasid lies in its adaptability, offering a framework to address modern complexities, including those arising from digital evolution, automation, and smart services.

Legal scholars categorize shari'ah objectives into three hierarchical levels: the essentials, the complementary, and the embellishments. The essentials form the critical foundation for human existence and social order. These comprise the preservation of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth, all of which directly intersect with the rights and needs of people of determination. The preservation of life mandates the provision of healthcare and safety-enhancing services, while the preservation of intellect dictates the availability of appropriate education and assistive technologies that foster cognitive development, learning, and communication.

Furthermore, the preservation of wealth requires enabling fair and secure access to financial and economic services for individuals with disabilities, while the preservation of human dignity demands the eradication of social and technical barriers that hinder community integration. Viewed through this lens, Maqasid al-Shari'ah serves as an applicable reference point for designing digital services tailored to persons with disabilities, particularly as daily reliance on technology extends across governmental, educational, and medical institutions.

Digital Services Designed for People of Determination

Digital services encompass platforms, internet applications, and artificial intelligence systems utilized to streamline access to information and optimize institutional performance. Driven by accelerating global digital transformation, these services have become indispensable across public and private sectors, heavily impacting commerce, education, healthcare, and civil administration.

When directed toward people of determination, digital services must be engineered to accommodate diverse auditory, visual, physical, and cognitive impairments, enabling independent and secure interaction. Such services include screen readers for the visually impaired, voice recognition software, real-time sign language interpretation, and specialized educational applications. Additionally, this requires configuring website architectures according to international digital accessibility standards to ensure ease of navigation for all user groups.

Advanced technology has enhanced opportunities for people of determination in education, employment, and social connectivity by permitting remote access to essential services without the physical constraints of traditional environments. Multimedia integration and interactive platforms have minimized instructional barriers, allowing individuals with disabilities to acquire skills and knowledge more effectively.

Despite these technological strides, substantial obstacles persist within the digital landscape. Prominent challenges include inconsistent compliance with accessibility standards, a lack of universal design principles on e-government platforms, and the prohibitive cost of advanced assistive hardware. Many digital architectures continue to be designed without considering individual functional variances, resulting in a persistent digital divide that restricts the benefits of modern technological progress for individuals with disabilities.

The Structural Role of Maqasid al-Shari'ah in Digital Service Development

Maqasid al-Shari'ah functions as a fundamental framework for directing technological and digital innovation toward human welfare. Islamic law addresses broader social and

humanitarian goals rooted in equity, compassion, ease, and dignity. Given the pervasive integration of technology in modern life, incorporating the needs of people of determination into digital frameworks has become an urgent necessity, ensuring this demographic is not excluded from contemporary technological advancements.

The nexus between shari'ah objectives and digital services is explicitly evident in the preservation of life, a core essential in Islamic law. Jurisprudence mandates protecting human health and physical safety, a priority currently supported by digital health solutions for people of determination. Telehealth platforms, specialized mobile medical applications, and connected monitoring devices facilitate efficient healthcare access, particularly for individuals with mobility constraints. Technologies like smartwatches and automated digital health systems track vital metrics and provide real-time alerts, enhancing safety and overall quality of life.

Similarly, the preservation of intellect is directly tied to the development of inclusive digital education. Islamic philosophy prioritizes knowledge acquisition as a mechanism for human empowerment and societal progression. Digital education provides a vital pathway for equal learning opportunities through smart educational platforms and interactive software. AI-driven programs and multi-sensory applications enable visually, auditorily, and cognitively impaired students to comprehend complex curricula, while digital sign language translation tools foster meaningful participation within educational environments.

Furthermore, the preservation of human dignity dictates that all individuals are inherently valued, irrespective of physical, mental, or social differences. The Quran affirms universal human dignity, which translates operationally into a mandate for equitable and inclusive digital spaces. Inaccessible digital design excludes individuals with disabilities from essential services, whereas universal design promotes independent living and social integration.

This objective is particularly critical for e-government services, digital identity frameworks, online banking, and remote employment platforms. When digital infrastructures align with the requirements of people of determination, they reduce systemic reliance on third-party assistance, thereby reinforcing individual dignity and autonomy. Implementing web accessibility guidelines eliminates technical barriers and strengthens equal opportunity across the socio-economic spectrum.

The preservation of wealth also intersects with modern digital infrastructure, especially within the digital economy and electronic financial services. Individuals with sensory or physical disabilities often face logistical hurdles at traditional brick-and-mortar financial institutions. Digital banking platforms and secure financial applications resolve these challenges by enabling independent fiscal management. Moreover, e-commerce and remote work models generate new economic pathways, improving livelihood standards and fostering financial inclusion.

In the same context, the overarching shari'ah principles of facilitation and the removal of hardship align with the philosophy of assistive technology and inclusive design. Modern technology is not merely an optional luxury; it is an essential mechanism for social justice.

Thus, developing accessible digital services is a practical application of the principle of ease established in Islamic jurisprudence.

Integrating artificial intelligence into services for people of determination represents a contemporary application of these objectives. AI-driven tools, such as speech-to-text, text-to-speech, and personalized predictive interfaces, significantly enhance communication, information retrieval, and functional independence.

Importantly, shari'ah objectives demand equity in resource distribution, opposing monopoly or restricted access. Digital justice is an extension of Islamic equity, requiring that all individuals receive equal opportunities to benefit from technological progress, regardless of physical or economic status. This emphasizes the role of legislative and state regulations in mandating public and private entities to implement comprehensive digital accessibility.

Recent studies confirm a alignment between inclusive technology principles and Maqasid al-Shari'ah regarding the rights and societal integration of individuals with disabilities. Digital infrastructure serves as a tool for social equity, enabling active participation in academic, social, and economic life, in harmony with Islamic values of equality and respect. Therefore, optimizing digital services for people of determination is an ethical and humanitarian responsibility that aligns with shari'ah objectives to protect human rights and advance public welfare, contributing to sustainable development and social equity within the modern digital era.

Contemporary Challenges and Future Horizons

Despite widespread advancements in digital transformation, people of determination continue to face barriers that limit their full utilization of smart services. If digital environments are developed without considering the diverse functional needs of users, technology can inadvertently become a mechanism for social exclusion. Consequently, the success of digital transformation must be indexed not only by technological speed, but by its capacity to deliver digital equity and inclusion for all demographics.

A prominent challenge is the deficient implementation of digital accessibility standards across websites and smart platforms. Many electronic services rely on conventional architectures that do not account for individual sensory or physical differences. For example, numerous platforms lack integrated text-to-speech functionalities, scalable typography, or voice-command options necessary for visually impaired users. Similarly, a shortage of real-time sign language translation features restricts deaf users from fully accessing digital education, healthcare information, and government systems.

The digital divide presents another obstacle, driven by socioeconomic disparities and varied technological infrastructures. Advanced assistive tools including specialized braille smart devices, high-end speech recognition software, and digitally integrated mobility aids are often cost-prohibitive for many families and individuals. Furthermore, suboptimal digital infrastructure in specific regions leads to lower service quality, reducing the operational efficiency of online platforms.

Institutional and societal awareness regarding universal design remains insufficient. Organizations often prioritize aesthetic or standard technical specifications during digital development, neglecting accessibility metrics and the specific requirements of people of determination. This is frequently exacerbated by the misconception that digital adaptation represents an extraneous cost rather than a fundamental regulatory and humanitarian requirement, which slows down the progress of digital inclusion.

Finally, individuals with disabilities frequently face a gap in digital literacy and technical training, particularly those who have been excluded from formal educational pipelines. The rapid evolution of technology requires continuous skill acquisition to navigate modern platforms. Without systemic, targeted training initiatives, many users cannot fully leverage modern applications and assistive devices to achieve digital autonomy.

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) and digital transformation introduces critical ethical and legislative challenges concerning the privacy and personal data protection of persons with disabilities. Numerous smart applications rely heavily on collecting users' health or behavioral data, necessitating robust legal frameworks to safeguard the privacy of individuals with disabilities and prevent any illicit or unethical exploitation of their information. The significance of this issue intensifies with the expanding deployment of intelligent systems, facial and voice recognition technologies, and behavioral analysis in digital service delivery.

Conversely, certain societies still maintain conventional perceptions of persons with disabilities, frequently viewing them merely as recipients of care rather than active, empowered participants in community life. This perspective directly influences the development of digital policies and services, which may be designed inequitably or non-inclusively, thereby exacerbating the digital and social exclusion of individuals with disabilities.

To address these challenges, there is an urgent need to adopt comprehensive strategies grounded in the principles of digital justice and technological inclusion, ensuring the provision of accessible electronic services to all users without discrimination. The implementation of universal digital accessibility standards stands as one of the most critical obligations for both public and private institutions when designing websites and smart applications, ensuring these services remain functional and effective for individuals with diverse disabilities.

Furthermore, fostering innovation in assistive technology represents a vital prospective solution for enhancing digital services for individuals with disabilities. Investing in AI and smart technologies can catalyze the development of sophisticated solutions that empower persons with disabilities to learn, work, and communicate with greater independence. Prominent examples include the advancement of intelligent voice assistants, text-to-speech technologies, and wearable devices that assist individuals with visual and mobility impairments in navigating and interacting with their environments.

Enhancing partnerships among governments, educational institutions, technology corporations, and civil society organizations is equally essential to establishing a more inclusive and sustainable digital ecosystem. The success of digital transformation depends

not only on technological advancement but also on supportive policies, clear legislation, and training programs that raise digital awareness and enable individuals with disabilities to utilize technology efficiently.

In this context, educational institutions play a pivotal role in designing specialized technical and training programs for persons with disabilities, enabling them to acquire the digital skills demanded by the modern labour market. Additionally, concepts of digital inclusion and universal design must be integrated into academic curricula and software developer training programs, ensuring that the needs of individuals with disabilities become a foundational component of digital service development.

Another critical intervention involves promoting the concept of inclusive digital governance, whereby government institutions commit to delivering electronic services that accommodate all societal segments while providing specialized technical support channels for persons with disabilities. Digital procedures must be simplified, and flexible, user-friendly interfaces must be developed to assist individuals with disabilities in accessing services without technical complexity or barriers (Al-Khouri, 2021).

Within the same framework, the objectives of Islamic Sharia (Maqasid al-Sharia) serve as an important reference point for addressing these challenges, emphasizing the necessity of removing harm, realizing the public interest, and guaranteeing justice and equality among people. The Sharia principle of facilitation aligns directly with the conceptualization of digital services that ease the lives of persons with disabilities and foster their full integration into society. Moreover, the objective of preserving human dignity dictates the eradication of all forms of discrimination or digital exclusion that persons with disabilities might encounter.

Recent scholarship underscores that inclusive technology serves as an effective mechanism for achieving social justice and enhancing the participation of persons with disabilities in various spheres of life, particularly when these services are developed in accordance with ethical and humanitarian principles that respect human needs and dignity (Afif et al., 2025). Therefore, constructing an equitable digital environment is not merely a technical option but a developmental and humanitarian imperative requiring collective collaboration to ensure that individuals with disabilities benefit from digital progress in an equitable, secure, and sustainable manner.

Consequently, the future of digital services dedicated to persons with disabilities remains contingent upon the capacity of societies to integrate technology with human values and ethical principles. This alignment ensures that the digital environment becomes an equitable and inclusive space offering equal opportunities for education, employment, and social participation, thereby realizing sustainable development and preserving human dignity in the modern digital era.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the objectives of Islamic Sharia provide a comprehensive framework for developing digital services tailored to persons with disabilities, given their foundational principles of preserving human dignity, ensuring justice and equality, and alleviating hardship. The findings indicate that digital transformation should not be confined

to technical dimensions; rather, it must be linked to a humanitarian and ethical dimension that guarantees the inclusion of all societal segments, particularly persons with disabilities, in benefiting from modern services and technologies.

The study further highlights that modern digital technology has significantly enhanced the quality of life for individuals with disabilities by providing more accessible and flexible educational, health, social, and financial services, while simultaneously supporting their autonomy and social integration. Assistive technologies, artificial intelligence, and digital platforms have played a vital role in dismantling conventional barriers that historically restricted the participation of persons with disabilities across various domains.

In contrast, the study identifies several persistent challenges confronting the development of digital services for individuals with disabilities. Prominent among these are the substandard application of digital accessibility standards, the prohibitive cost of certain assistive technologies, a lack of institutional awareness regarding universal digital design, and the digital divide that impedes the ability of certain groups to access and utilize technology effectively.

The analysis confirms that the objectives of Islamic Sharia specifically the preservation of life, intellect, wealth, and human dignity are highly congruent with the concepts of digital inclusion and technological equity. Sharia advocates for facilitating human life, fulfilling human interests, and prohibiting any form of exclusion or discrimination. Hence, the development of accessible digital services for persons with disabilities is not merely a contemporary technological trend, but a humanitarian and societal responsibility aligned with Islamic values and sustainable development principles.

In light of these findings, the study emphasizes the necessity of strengthening cooperation among governments, educational institutions, and technology firms to develop more inclusive and equitable digital services. This must be accompanied by supporting innovation in assistive technologies and advancing legislation and policies that guarantee the secure and fair access of persons with disabilities to digital services. Finally, the study recommends cultivating awareness of universal design principles and anchoring digital transformation in ethical and humanitarian standards, thereby contributing to the realization of a more just and sustainable digital society.

This study offers significant theoretical and contextual contributions to the existing literature by bridging the gap between Islamic jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) and contemporary digital ethics. Theoretically, it expands the scope of *Maqasid al-Sharia* by operationalizing traditional legal objectives within the realm of digital accessibility and technological equity, providing a novel socio-ethical framework for modern governance. Contextually, the research advances knowledge on inclusive digital transformation by contextualizing the needs of persons with disabilities within a value-driven paradigm, shifting the discourse from a purely technical compliance model to a profound moral and societal obligation. Consequently, these insights offer a cross-disciplinary benchmark for policymakers and technologists aiming to align sustainable development goals with localized religious and ethical values.

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