



Between Text, Technology and Context: Contemporary *Ijtihād* in the Interpretation of Islamic Legal Sources in the Digital Age

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Abstract

Purpose - The rapid development of digital civilisation has fundamentally transformed the methods by which Muslims access, produce, and interpret sources of Islamic law. Concurrently, this transformation necessitates a methodological renewal in contemporary independent juristic reasoning (*ijtihād*). This article aims to explore a model of Islamic legal interpretation that reconciles the methodological legacy of the Islamic legal theory (*uṣūlī*) tradition with interpretive practices in the digital age. The study emphasises the integration of meticulous textual analysis, an awareness of contemporary social contexts, and the ethical and responsible application of technology.

Methodology/approach - The study employs a qualitative approach characterised by a normative-critical design. The analysis draws upon Islamic legal texts, the literature on Islamic legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), and scholarly research on digital religion and technology. Moreover, the analytical framework integrates textual, historical, social, and technological dimensions within the context of the objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*), thereby facilitating a more comprehensive understanding. Building upon this foundation, the study proposes a novel integrative framework that systematically synthesises *uṣūl al-fiqh*, digital epistemology, and *maqāṣid*-based ethics.

Findings - The findings indicate that classical *uṣūl al-fiqh* methodologies remain adaptive when reinterpreted through a *maqāṣid*-oriented and context-sensitive approach. In this regard, digital technology functions not merely as a tool; rather, it also acts as an epistemic agent that shapes contemporary legal reasoning and authority. The article further demonstrates that digital technology holds considerable potential to expand access and enhance efficiency in the interpretation of Islamic law. Nevertheless, its use must be guided by sound methodological principles and scholarly ethics. An integrative interpretive model grounded in text, technology, and context enables Islamic law to remain relevant, authoritative, and oriented towards public welfare (*maṣlaḥah*) amid ongoing social dynamics and technological developments. The scholarly contribution of this study lies in proposing a conceptual model of digital *ijtihād* that not only enriches contemporary Islamic legal theory but also provides a foundation for future interdisciplinary research on law, technology, and society.

Conclusion - This research advocates for the advancement of a more interdisciplinary *ijtihād* methodology through the integration of digital literacy, technology ethics, and the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*. This approach aims to enhance Islamic legal interpretation's capacity to address the challenges posed by digital society in a more comprehensive manner.

Keywords: Contemporary *Ijtihād*; Digital Civilization; Digital Epistemology; *Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah*; *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*.

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Introduction

Social and technological changes in the twenty-first century have transformed the ways in which individuals access, produce, and disseminate religious knowledge. The digital transformation, characterised by the proliferation of social media, digital text databases, and artificial intelligence tools, has reconfigured the landscape of religious authority, community dynamics, and practices of interpreting sacred texts. The phenomenon of "digital religion" illustrates that religious practice now occurs across both online and offline spaces, necessitating the recontextualisation of traditional methodologies of textual reading to ensure their relevance in this new reality.¹ These technological changes present specific challenges for *ijtihād* and the interpretation of the sources of Islamic law, namely the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Firstly, the fragmentation of authority through the emergence of "online mujtahids," digital fatwa platforms, and unverified sources may undermine traditional mechanisms of quality control.² Secondly, the rapid dissemination of information and algorithmic practices influence the readings of the historical and sociocultural contexts of the texts, increasing the risk of anachronism and literalist interpretations. Thirdly, the availability of computational tools raises both opportunities and normative questions regarding the validity of methods of legal deduction (*istinbāt*) in the algorithmic era.³

Classical studies on the interpretation of the sources of Islamic law are deeply rooted in the tradition of Islamic legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), which emphasises the authority of the texts (the Qur'an and the Sunnah), linguistic principles, and systematic methods of *istinbāt*. However, in both classical and contemporary literature, textual approaches have never been understood in isolation; rather, they have consistently interacted with social and historical contexts, as well as with the objectives of the law (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*).⁴ With the rise of modernity and globalisation, scholarly attention has shifted towards the importance of contextualising Islamic law to ensure its relevance to contemporary social, political, and economic changes.⁵ Through a systems approach, Jasser Auda has expanded the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* to respond more holistically to the complexities of modern society. This body of literature emphasises that understanding legal texts must take into account the dynamics of ever-changing contexts, including developments in science and technology, without abandoning the methodological discipline of the *uṣūlī* tradition.⁶

Digital spaces have emerged as significant arenas for the production, distribution, and negotiation of religious knowledge and authority.⁷ Numerous studies indicate that interpretation and Islamic legal discourse within these digital environments tend to be concise

¹ Zuzana Bezáková, "Online and Offline Communities Communication as Part of Religious Living," *European Journal of Science and Theology* 16, no. 2 (2020): 95–102.

² Hamka Ilyas, Abd. Bashir Fatmal, and La Ode Ismail Ahmad, "Digital Jihad in Qur'anic Perspective: An Islamic Response to the Challenges of Cyberspace in the Age of Artificial Intelligence (AI)," *QOF* 9, no. 2 (2025): 189–206, <https://doi.org/10.30762/qof.v9i2.3091>.

³ Soleh Hasan Wahid, "Exploring the Intersection of Islam and Digital Technology: A Bibliometric Analysis," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 10, no. 101085 (2024): 1–28, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2024.101085>.

⁴ Mustapha Tajdin, "Sharī'a as State Law: An Analysis of 'allāl Al-Fāsi's Concept of The Objectives of Islamic Law," *Journal of Law and Religion* 35, no. 3 (2020): 494–514, <https://doi.org/10.1017/jlr.2020.41>.

⁵ Siddiqa Aslam Qureshi, "Understanding Sharia Law: Principles and Application," *Al-Awan* 1, no. 1 (2024).

⁶ Serdar Kurnaz, "The Search for Originality within Established Boundaries—Rereading Najm Al-Dīn Al-Ṭūfi (d. 716/1316) on Public Interest (Maṣlaḥa) and the Purpose of the Law," *Religions* 14, no. 13 (2023): 1522, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14121522>.

⁷ Sahar Khamis, "Review of Hashtag Islam: How Cyber-Islamic Environments Are Transforming Religious Authority, by Gary R. Bunt," *American Religion* 3, no. 1 (2021): 113–16, <https://doi.org/10.2979/amerreli.3.1.07>.

and popularised, often at the expense of methodological depth.⁸ The utilisation of algorithms and artificial intelligence in Islamic studies, while beneficial for data management and analysis, remains constrained in its ability to encapsulate the ethical and normative dimensions of Islamic law.⁹ Several studies demonstrate that the internet has broadened access to Islamic sources, resulting in interpretive authority no longer being solely concentrated within traditional religious institutions. Eickelman and Anderson contend that digital media has fostered the emergence of a "new Muslim public sphere," which facilitates increased participation of Muslim individuals in religious discourse.¹⁰ Bunt illustrates that digital spaces enable the rise of various new forms of authority, including digital scholars, religious influencers, and online interpretive communities, which significantly influence perspectives on Islamic law.¹¹

In addition to alterations in the structure of authority, numerous studies underscore the impact of digital technology on the methodologies employed in the interpretation of Islamic texts. Some scholars contend that these technologies can enhance research efficiency and expand access to the classical Islamic intellectual heritage.¹² Moreover, recent scholarship accentuates the necessity of establishing a paradigm of *ijtihad* that effectively bridges textual analysis, technological developments, and the social context within the framework of digital civilisation. This approach necessitates the integration of the classical discipline of *uṣūl al-fiqh* with interdisciplinary perspectives, encompassing media studies, technology ethics, and contemporary social sciences.¹³

Within the domains of Qur'anic exegesis and *uṣūl al-fiqh*, the term "digital hermeneutics" underscores the necessity for a technology-sensitive interpretive methodology. This approach examines how metadata, hyperlinking, and multimodality reshape the ways in which texts are read and their connections to social contexts. Empirical studies indicate shifts in popular interpretive practices on social media and applications that affect the legitimacy and application of legal principles.¹⁴

Although the literature on text, context, and technology has expanded significantly, there remains a paucity of studies that systematically integrate these three elements within a framework for interpreting the sources of Islamic law. Some studies focus predominantly on the normative aspects of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, while others concentrate on media and technology studies without a thorough engagement with Islamic legal methodology. Consequently, this article aims to address this gap by providing an integrative analysis that connects Islamic legal texts, advancements in digital technology, and contemporary social contexts as a unified analytical

⁸ Misbahul Arifin and Muhammad Zaki Maulana, "The Role of Philosophical Hermeneutics in Contextual Qur'anic Exegesis in the Digital Age," *Al-Mashadir: Journal of Quranic Sciences and Tafsir* 1, no. 1 (2025): 37–46.

⁹ Muhammad Edo Rahman, Fadilla Syahriani, and Wilibaldus Jampa, "Islamic Law in the Digital Era: Artificial Intelligence As A Revolutionary Legal Tool in The 21st Century," *Al-Hurriyah: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 9, no. 2 (2024): 102–15, <https://doi.org/10.30983/al-hurriyah.v9i2.8545>.

¹⁰ Sufri Eka Bhakti and Saifuddin Dhuhri, "The Digital Public Sphere and Muslim Piety in Aceh: Rethinking Habermas Conception of Communicative Action". *Islam Realitas*, *Journal of Islamic and Social Studies* 8, no. 1 (2022): 12–21, https://doi.org/10.30983/islam_realitas.v8i1.5462.

¹¹ Ilyas, Fatmal, and Ahmad, "Digital Jihad in Qur'anic Perspective: An Islamic Response to the Challenges of Cyberspace in the Age of Artificial Intelligence (AI)."

¹² Antoine Perrier and Clément Salah, "Islamic Studies and the Digital Humanities: Introduction," *Revue Des Mondes Musulmans et de La Méditerranée* 156 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.4000/130g0>.

¹³ Heidi A Campbell and Giulia Evolvi, "Contextualizing Current Digital Religion Research on Emerging Technologies," *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies* 2, no. 1 (2020): 5–17, <https://doi.org/10.1002/hbe2.149>.

¹⁴ Arifin and Maulana, "The Role of Philosophical Hermeneutics in Contextual Qur'anic Exegesis in the Digital Age."

framework. The significance of this study lies in its potential to enhance the relevance and adaptability of Islamic legal theory within the digital era. Furthermore, its anticipated scholarly contribution includes offering a novel interdisciplinary framework that enriches contemporary scholarship and establishes a foundation for future research at the intersection of Islamic law, technology, and society.

This article seeks to explore an interpretive model that can effectively bridge the methodological heritage of the *uṣūlī* tradition with contemporary practices of Islamic legal interpretation in the digital era. The proposed model is anticipated to integrate rigorous textual analysis, sensitivity to social context, and the ethical and responsible use of technology, ensuring that the interpretation of Islamic law remains relevant, authoritative, and oriented towards public welfare (*maṣlaḥah*) amidst the dynamics of contemporary society.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach with a normative–critical design, combined with a contextual analysis of the interpretive practices of Islamic law sources in the digital era. The research data consist of primary sources in the form of Islamic legal texts (the Qur'an, hadith, and *uṣūl al-fiqh* literature) and secondary sources in the form of international journal articles, academic books, as well as interpretive content and fatwas published through digital platforms. Data collection is conducted through library research and digital exploration, while data analysis utilises textual and contextual hermeneutical approaches, emphasising the relationship between text (*naṣṣ*), technology (digital media and tools), and social context. The analytical framework is grounded in the principles of *uṣūl al-fiqh* and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* to assess the normative implications of the use of technology in the process of interpreting Islamic law, thereby producing an integrative understanding that is both theoretical and reflective in nature.

Text as the normative foundation of Islamic legal sources

Sacred texts, particularly the Qur'an and the Sunnah, occupy a fundamental position as the normative foundation within the Islamic legal system. In the Islamic scholarly tradition, texts are not merely understood as historical documents; rather, they are regarded as authoritative sources that contain binding norms, values, and legal guidance. Contemporary literature affirms that the authority of these texts is constructed through extensive processes of transmission, codification, and scholarly institutionalisation, such that the legitimacy of Islamic law is rooted in the authenticity and stability of the texts themselves.¹⁵ Consequently, texts consistently serve as both the starting point and the primary reference in every process of legal reasoning and derivation.

Islamic legal texts have never existed in isolation. From the inception of Islamic legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), scholars have acknowledged that a comprehensive understanding of these texts necessitates rigorous methodological tools for their appropriate application. The textual analysis within Islam invariably entails linguistic examination, semantic structures, and intertextual relationships, which are subsequently articulated into *uṣūl* principles such as general and specific textual interpretation (*'ām-khāṣṣ*), unrestricted and restricted expressions (*muṭlaq–muqayyad*), and abrogation (*naskh*). These observations emphasise that the normativity

¹⁵ Johanna Pink, "Review of Rediscovering the Islamic Classics, by Ahmed El Shamsy," *Die Welt Des Islams* 61, no. 2 (2021): 247–253, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700607-61020013>.

of texts is maintained through systematic methodological discipline, rather than through literal readings that are disconnected from their epistemological contexts.¹⁶

Within the framework of Islamic law, textual sources serve as normative boundaries for the exercise of *ijtihad*. The flexibility inherent in *ijtihad* must remain aligned with the guidance provided by these texts to ensure that legal reasoning does not become detached from the framework of revelation.¹⁷ Concurrently, the normativity of these texts is characterised by a layered complexity rather than a monolithic structure. Variations in the levels of textual clarity (*qat'ī* and *ẓannī*) create space for diverse interpretations while preserving the authority of the texts themselves.¹⁸ Consequently, interpretive plurality emerges as an epistemological consequence of Islamic legal texts, rather than posing a threat to their normative foundations.

In the digital era, Islamic legal texts are increasingly being digitised through electronic Qur'anic codices (*muṣṣhaf*), hadith databases, and online Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) archives. Although technology enhances access, the authority of these texts is not automatically ensured by their digital availability, particularly when texts become fragmented and detached from the scholarly traditions that sustain them.¹⁹ Recent literature indicates that the continuity of textual authority relies on the interpreter's ability to situate texts within a balanced relationship between normative fidelity and contextual sensitivity. In this regard, texts continue to function as ethical and juridical anchors that guide the adaptation of Islamic law to social and technological change, while technology and context serve as dialogical instruments that responsibly broaden legal understanding.²⁰

The enduring authority of Islamic legal texts resides not solely in their preservation or digital accessibility, but in the ongoing interaction between textual fidelity, methodological rigor, and contextual awareness. The digital era does not diminish the centrality of the Qur'an and the Sunnah; rather, it amplifies the necessity for disciplined interpretive frameworks that can safeguard their normative integrity amidst new epistemic conditions. Consequently, the challenge lies not in supplanting the authority of texts with technological mediation, but in ensuring that technology functions as a supportive instrument within a coherent *uṣūlī* methodology, thereby allowing Islamic legal reasoning to remain both authoritative and responsive to contemporary realities.

The historical dimension in the interpretation of the sources of Islamic law

The historical dimension constitutes a fundamental aspect of understanding the sources of Islamic law, particularly in relation to the socio-historical context of revelation. The Qur'an and the Sunnah emerged within the specific realities of seventh-century Arabian society, which exhibited distinct social, cultural, and political structures. Historical studies reveal that

¹⁶ Ezieddin Elmahjub, "Islamic Jurisprudence as an Ethical Discourse: An Enquiry into the Nature of Moral Reasoning in Islamic Legal Theory," *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion* 10, no. 1 (2021): 16–42, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ojlr/rwaa023>.

¹⁷ Wasman, Mesraini, and Suwendi, "A Critical Approach to Prophetic Traditions: Contextual Criticism in Understanding Hadith," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 61, no. 1 (2023): 1–17, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2023.611.1-17>.

¹⁸ Iffatin Nur and Muhammad Ngizzul Muttaqin, "Reformulating The Concept of Maslahah: From A Textual Confinement Towards A Logic Determination," *Justicia Islamica* 17, no. 1 (2020): 73–91, <https://doi.org/10.21154/justicia.v17i1.1807>.

¹⁹ Abu Bakar Khan Khan and Noor Ul Huda Khan, "Revival of Ijtihad; Indispensable for the Adaptability of Islamic Law," *Pakistan Journal of Criminal Justice* 4, no. 1 (2024): 147–57, <https://doi.org/10.62585/pjcr.v4i1.77>.

²⁰ Elmahjub, "Islamic Jurisprudence as an Ethical Discourse: An Enquiry into the Nature of Moral Reasoning in Islamic Legal Theory."

numerous Islamic legal rulings are directly linked to the concrete situations encountered by the early Muslim community, including kinship relations, economic practices, and power structures.²¹ Consequently, understanding the occasions of revelation (*aṣbāb al-nuzūl*) and the occasions of hadith transmission (*aṣbāb al-wurūd*) becomes a crucial instrument for comprehensively grasping the normative intent of the texts.

The historical approach does not serve to relativise the revealed texts; rather, it aims to elucidate the horizons of meaning they encompass. While revelation is transcendent, its comprehension is invariably mediated by human historical conditions. Through historical-critical analysis, Islamic legal interpretation is able to differentiate between universal values (*al-qiyām al-kullīyyah*) and particular rulings that are contingent upon specific temporal contexts.²² In this manner, history functions as an epistemological instrument that preserves the relevance of Islamic law across time and space, without compromising the normative authority of the texts.

As Islamic history progressed, the methodology for interpreting legal sources experienced considerable evolution, transitioning from individual *ijtihād* practices during the era of the Companions to the establishment of the classical schools of law. The development of hadith and *fiqh* methodologies constituted intellectual responses to the necessity of preserving authenticity and legal consistency in the face of territorial expansion and increasing social complexity within the Muslim community. In this context, the scholarly tradition (*turāth*) serves as a historical medium that connects the revealed texts with the ever-changing social practices, while also providing a framework for the institutionalisation of interpretive methods.²³

The relationship between text, tradition, and scholarly authority illustrates that the interpretation of Islamic law has consistently occurred within specific social contexts. Scholarly authority is established through social recognition of methodological competence and moral integrity, rather than solely through textual assertions.²⁴ From a historical standpoint, this mechanism functions as epistemological control, ensuring that legal interpretation remains within scholarly parameters and adheres to Islamic normative values. The continuity of Islamic law throughout history is fundamentally linked to its ability to adapt via well-managed historical mechanisms. Therefore, historical understanding does not undermine textual authority; rather, it enhances the vitality of Islamic law in addressing the dynamics of contemporary society, including modernity and technological advancements.²⁵

Thus, the historical dimension emerges not as a peripheral supplement but as an essential epistemological framework that ensures the meaningful and responsible interpretation of Islamic legal sources. Far from undermining the authority of revelation, historical analysis facilitates a more precise articulation of the objectives and scope of the law by distinguishing between its universal principles and context-bound applications. This illustrates that the vitality of Islamic law resides in its capacity to engage dynamically with

²¹ Khan and Khan, "Revival of Ijtihad; Indispensable for the Adaptability of Islamic Law."

²² Hicham Diouane et al., "The Dynamics of Islamic Thought in Responding to Contemporary Challenges," *Bulletin of Islamic Research* 3, no. 4 (2025): 671–86.

²³ Emad Hamdeh, "Prophetic Hadith and the Qur'ān-Only Movement: The Response of Muslim Scholars," *Journal of Islamic and Muslim Studies* 7, no. 2 (2022): 107–19, <https://doi.org/10.2979/ims.2022.a896982>.

²⁴ Ahmed Gad Makhoul, "Continuity and Change of Traditional Islamic Law in Modern Times: Tarjīḥ as a Method of Adaptation and Development of Legal Doctrines," *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion* 12, no. 1 (2023): 55–74, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ojlr/rwad010>.

²⁵ Aaron Rock-Singer, "The Rise of Islamic Society: Social Change, State Power, and Historical Imagination," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 64, no. 4 (2022): 994–1023, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417522000317>.

evolving social realities while remaining anchored in its normative foundations. Consequently, a historically informed approach is indispensable for sustaining the continuity, adaptability, and intellectual integrity of Islamic legal reasoning, particularly in addressing to the complexities of contemporary and technologically mediated societies.

Technology and the transformation of Islamic legal interpretation

The advancement of digital technology has catalysed the extensive digitisation of Islamic texts, encompassing the Qur'an, hadith, works of exegesis, and classical *fiqh* literature. This digitisation has profoundly transformed the modalities of access, reading, and utilisation of these texts within both scholarly practice and quotidian religious life. The transition from print to digital media not only enhances access to knowledge but also reconfigures structures of authority and alters the dynamics of relationships between readers and texts.²⁶ In the realm of Islamic law, the ease of access to a diverse array of classical sources has the potential to enrich scholarly discourse; however, it simultaneously presents significant challenges pertaining to selection, validation, and the establishment of hierarchies among legal sources.

Beyond the digitisation of texts, digital media play a pivotal role in shaping contemporary practices of Islamic legal interpretation. Digital media create new discursive spaces that are inherently decentralised, where the production and dissemination of religious knowledge are no longer monopolised by traditional institutions.²⁷ Within these spaces, interpretations and legal viewpoints are generated by a diverse array of actors with varying scholarly backgrounds. Consequently, media technology serves as a mediator of interpretation that influences the form, style, and legitimacy of interpretive authority in Islamic law.

At the methodological level, computational technologies, including hadith databases, thematic search engines, and text analysis tools, have significantly transformed the practice of Islamic legal research. Digital databases facilitate a more rapid and systematic tracing of chains of transmission (*isnād*), textual content (*matn*), and the comparative positions of various legal schools. However, this convenience also introduces the risk of methodological simplification when digital search results are employed mechanically, without adequate consideration of the historical and epistemological contexts, as well as the *uṣūl al-fiqh* framework that underpin these texts.²⁸

The development of artificial intelligence signifies a new phase in the transformation of Islamic legal interpretation, particularly through natural language processing (NLP) for hadith classification, thematic analysis of Qur'anic verses, and the recommendation of legal responses. Artificial intelligence operates on statistical patterns rather than normative and ethical understandings.²⁹ Consequently, the epistemological implications of employing such technologies, including the fragmentation of knowledge and a propensity for superficial readings, necessitate careful consideration. Technology must be positioned as a supportive instrument that enhances human analytical capacity, while the authority of Islamic legal

²⁶ Monika Andok, "The Impact of Online Media on Religious Authority," *Religions* 15, no. 9 (2024): 1103, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15091103>.

²⁷ Andok.

²⁸ Ibrahim Elshahat Mohamed Khamis, Abdollatif Ahmadi Ramchahi, and MY Zulkifli Mohd Yusoff, "Permissibility of the Literal Translation of The Glorious Qur'an: A New Perspective," *QURANICA-International Journal of Quranic Research* 15, no. 2 (2023): 25–57, <https://doi.org/10.22452/quranica.vol15no2.2>.

²⁹ Pradeep Paraman and Sanmugam Anamalah, "Ethical Artificial Intelligence Framework for a Good AI Society: Principles, Opportunities and Perils," *AI & Society* 38 (2023): 595–611, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00146-022-01458-3>.

interpretation remains grounded in the texts, *uṣūlī* methodology, and the interpreter's moral responsibility within tangible social contexts.³⁰

Digital transformation has significantly influenced the patterns of interaction between religious authorities and Muslim communities. Social media platforms, online discussion forums, and digital fatwa services facilitate Muslims' access to a variety of legal opinions instantaneously from diverse sources. Research indicates that this phenomenon engenders new forms of religious authority that are more fluid and participatory in comparison to the hierarchical structures characteristic of traditional authority.³¹ In this context, religious authority is no longer determined solely by institutional position or scholarly lineage; it is also shaped by the capacity of religious actors to utilise digital technologies to establish credibility, cultivate audience networks, and garner social legitimacy within online spaces. This transformation illustrates that digital technology functions not merely as a medium for disseminating Islamic law but also plays a pivotal role in shaping the dynamics of interpretive legitimacy within contemporary Muslim societies.

Furthermore, digital spaces have engendered new trends in the form and style of presenting Islamic legal knowledge. Religious content in digital media is frequently packaged in shorter, more visual, and easily digestible formats to adapt to the fast-paced and attention-driven nature of digital communication. Research on Islamic authority on the internet indicates that while such simplification may broaden audience reach, it also risks diminishing the complexity of Islamic legal methodology, which is inherently sophisticated and nuanced.³² Consequently, certain Islamic legal discourse in digital environments tends to be fragmentary and limited in contextual depth. This situation underscores the importance of maintaining a balance between effective public communication and the methodological integrity of the *uṣūl al-fiqh* tradition in the interpretation of Islamic law.

From a more reflective perspective, the development of digital technology necessitates the renewal of the paradigm of *ijtihād* capable of integrating the dimensions of text, technology, and social context simultaneously. Several scholars emphasise that *ijtihād* in the digital age is not solely concerned with determining legal rulings on new issues but also with understanding how technology itself shapes the ways in which humans interpret texts and perceive social realities.³³ In this context, contemporary *ijtihād* should be developed as a hermeneutical process that critically engages with technology rather than merely utilising it as a technical tool. Such an approach enables Islamic law to remain grounded in the authority of textual sources and classical methodology while remaining responsive to the epistemological transformations engendered by digital civilisation.

Contemporary social context and Islamic legal reasoning

The contemporary social context is a critical variable in Islamic legal reasoning, given that historically, Islamic law has consistently interacted with the social realities of the communities in which it is applied. Changes in social structures, power relations, economic patterns, and global cultural dynamics necessitate interpretations of Islamic law that are not solely text-oriented but also attuned to the empirical conditions of the ummah. Islamic law

³⁰ Andreas Tsamados et al., "The Ethics of Algorithms: Key Problems and Solutions," *AI & Society* 37, no. 1 (2022): 215–30, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00146-021-01154-8>.

³¹ Campbell and Evolvi, "Contextualizing Current Digital Religion Research on Emerging Technologies."

³² Khamis, "Review of Hashtag Islam: How Cyber-Islamic Environments Are Transforming Religious Authority," by Gary R. Bunt."

³³ Bezáková, "Online and Offline Communities Communication as Part of Religious Living."

functions as a living normative system (living law), and its relevance is significantly contingent upon its ability to respond to continually evolving social needs.³⁴

In modern societies that are pluralistic, global, and interconnected, Islamic legal reasoning confronts new challenges that were not fully encountered in pre-modern contexts. Issues such as human rights, citizenship, gender justice, and public ethics place Islamic law in dialogue with universal values. The engagement of Islamic law in contemporary public spaces requires a contextual approach capable of bridging religious norms with current socio-political realities without compromising normative integrity.³⁵

The complexity of modern social problems also necessitates the development of more interdisciplinary approaches to Islamic legal reasoning. The contemporary interpretation of Islamic law must engage the social sciences, ethics, and cultural studies to capture the human dimensions of legal issues.³⁶ In this context, the social setting is not merely an external backdrop but an integral component of the process of legal deduction (*istinbāt*), influencing both the formulation of rulings and the orientation of their application.

Beyond shaping methodology, the contemporary social context also influences how Islamic legal authority is constructed and negotiated. In increasingly educated and participatory societies, legal legitimacy is determined not only by textual evidence but also by the ability of rulings to deliver tangible justice and public benefit. Modern Islamic legal reasoning is increasingly directed towards a flexible yet principled *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* approach. Accordingly, the sustainability of Islamic law in modern societies is largely determined by its capacity to critically and constructively engage with social change. Thus, contextualisation is not a compromise of the text but an epistemological strategy to preserve the vitality of Islamic law amid the dynamics of the times.³⁷

In light of the above, the contemporary social context should be understood as an intrinsic component of Islamic legal reasoning rather than a secondary consideration. The responsiveness of Islamic law to issues such as justice, human dignity, and public welfare demonstrates that its normative strength lies in its capacity to engage constructively with changing social realities while remaining grounded in its foundational principles. A *maqāṣid*-oriented and interdisciplinary approach thus becomes essential to ensure that legal interpretations are not only textually valid but also socially meaningful and ethically relevant. Therefore, contextualisation is not a departure from the authority of the texts, but a necessary epistemological strategy that enables Islamic law to maintain its legitimacy, adaptability, and transformative role in increasingly complex and pluralistic modern societies.

³⁴ Hafiz Falak Shair Faizi and Hafiz Sfarish Ali, "The Core Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence within Legal Theory: A Comprehensive Analysis," *Online Journal of Research in Islamic Studies* 11, no. 2 (2024): 57–72, <https://doi.org/10.22452/ris.vol11no2.4>.

³⁵ Rehana Anjum and Dr. Muhammad Nawaz Hasani, "Sharia in the Modern World: A Comparative Study of the Islamic Law and the Social Contract Theory," *International Research Journal of Arabic and Islamic Studies* 3, no. 1 (2023): 156–66.

³⁶ Dr. Abdul Akhtar, Dr. Muhammad, Rasheed and Dr. Muhammad Rizwan, "Modernity and Islam in South Asia:: Approach of Darul Ulum Deoband". International," *International Journal of Academic Research for Humanities* 2, no. 1 (2022): 39–46, <https://jar.bwo-researches.com/index.php/jarh/article/view/17>.

³⁷ Suud Sarim Karimullah, "From Divine Revelation to Legal Practice: Contextualizing Islamic Law in the Contemporary Era," *Asy-Syir'ah: Jurnal Ilmu Syari'ah Dan Hukum* 59, no. 1 (2025): 36–47, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ajish.v59i1.1336>.

Integrating textual analysis, technological advancements, and contextual considerations in contemporary Islamic legal interpretation

The integration of text, technology, and context constitutes an epistemological necessity in contemporary Islamic legal interpretation. Revealed texts remain the primary normative foundation; however, their understanding is invariably mediated by social contexts and the methodological tools employed by interpreters. In modern societies characterised by rapid technological advancement, the relationship among these three elements cannot be positioned hierarchically or separately; rather, it must be understood as a dynamic unity. The development of Islamic law proceeds through a continuous dialectic between revelatory norms and the historical realities of the Muslim community.³⁸

Within this framework, technology functions as a medium and auxiliary tool for interpretation, rather than as an independent normative source. The digitisation of texts, fiqh databases, and computational analysis tools can expand the scope and efficiency of Islamic legal studies; yet, they still necessitate strict methodological control. The use of technology in Islamic studies must be accompanied by a critical awareness of the epistemic assumptions embedded within the technology itself.³⁹ Therefore, the integration of technology calls for an adaptive *uṣūl al-fiqh* framework that preserves both rigor and normative authority.

Concurrently, contemporary social context serves both as the arena for the actualisation of Islamic law and as an integral component of legal reasoning itself. The integration of text and technology, devoid of contextual sensitivity, risks producing ahistorical interpretations that are insufficiently responsive to societal needs. The success of modern Islamic law is largely determined by its ability to comprehend the social, political, and cultural dynamics of the global Muslim community.⁴⁰ Thus, context is not merely the backdrop for the application of law; rather, it also shapes the orientation and direction of legal deduction (*istinbāt*).

This integrative approach encourages a paradigm shift from formal legalism towards reflective and purpose-centred legal reasoning. In this regard, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* functions as a conceptual bridge that unites text, technology, and context while reinforcing the ethical and human dimensions of Islamic law.⁴¹ Although such integration creates space for plural interpretive authorities in the digital era, it remains crucial to uphold methodological discipline as the foundation of legal legitimacy. This integration is not an epistemological compromise; rather, it represents a creative continuation of the Islamic intellectual tradition in responding responsibly to the challenges of modern times.⁴²

In practice, the integration of text, technology, and context also fosters new forms of scholarly collaboration in the study of Islamic law. Digital environments enable scholars from various disciplines, such as Islamic studies, computer science, linguistics, and social sciences, to collaborate in analysing Islamic legal sources more comprehensively. Interdisciplinary

³⁸ Adeeb Obaid Alsuhaymi and Fouad Ahmed Atallah, "Reason and Revelation in Ibn Taymiyyah's Critique of Philosophical Theology: A Contribution to Contemporary Islamic Philosophy of Religion," *Religions* 16, no. 7 (2025): 809, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel16070809>.

³⁹ Perrier and Salah, "Islamic Studies and the Digital Humanities: Introduction."

⁴⁰ Emilia Justyna Powell and Ilana Rothkopf, "Domestic Constitutional Oversight and International Courts: Islamic Law States," *Journal of Law and Courts* 10, no. 2 (2022): 319–52, <https://doi.org/10.1086/716787>.

⁴¹ Nur and Muttaqin, "Reformulating The Concept of Maslahah: From A Textual Confinement Towards A Logic Determination."

⁴² Adiyono, Samsun Ni'am, and Akhyak, "Methodology of Islamic Studies: Islam as Religion (A Perspective Epistemology, Paradigm, and Methodology)," *Analisis: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 24, no. 1 (2024): 169–200, <https://doi.org/10.24042/ajsk.v24i1.22636>.

research demonstrates that the utilisation of digital tools in Islamic studies can broaden the scope of analysis of classical textual corpora while opening new methodological possibilities for understanding the dynamics of Islamic law.⁴³ Nevertheless, such collaboration necessitates a clear epistemological framework to ensure that technological innovation does not displace the methodological principles that have long formed the foundation of the *uṣūl al-fiqh* tradition.

Moreover, this integration also illustrates that digital technology can strengthen the contextual dimension of the *ijtihād* process. Through access to broader social data, such as social trends, patterns of public communication, and the dynamics of public opinion, Islamic legal scholars can gain a deeper understanding of the social realities in which legal rulings are applied. Studies on religion and digital media indicate that digital environments are not only spaces of communication but also spaces of meaning production that shape how religious communities comprehend values, norms, and religious authority.⁴⁴ Consequently, contextual analysis in the digital era is no longer confined to the physical realities of society; it also encompasses the dynamics of interaction within global digital ecosystems.

At the same time, integrating text, technology, and context necessitates renewed attention to the ethical dimension of Islamic legal reasoning. Development in digital technology often carry complex social and moral implications, ranging from issues of data privacy to the influence of algorithms on the formation of public opinion. In such circumstances, contemporary *ijtihād* must consider not only textual validity and contextual relevance but also the ethical implications of the legal decisions produced. Several studies on technology ethics from religious perspectives emphasise that the Islamic legal tradition possesses rich conceptual resources for addressing such challenges, particularly through the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, which underscores the protection of human welfare.⁴⁵ Thus, the integration of text, technology, and context not only expands the horizons of Islamic legal interpretation but also reinforces its role as a normative system responsive to social change in digital civilisation.

The integration of text, technology, and context should be understood as an essential paradigm for ensuring the continuity and relevance of Islamic legal interpretation in the digital age. This integrative approach demonstrates that the authority of Islamic law is not diminished by technological advancement; rather, it is strengthened when guided by methodological rigor and ethical awareness rooted in *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. By positioning technology as a supportive epistemic instrument and context as an active dimension of legal reasoning, Islamic law can transcend rigid formalism in favour of a more reflective, adaptive, and purpose-oriented framework. Consequently, this paradigm not only preserves the normative integrity of the *uṣūl al-fiqh* tradition but also enables it to engage constructively with the complexities of contemporary digital civilisation.

⁴³ Eid Mohamed and Mai Zaki, "Crossing Boundaries: New Frontiers in Digital Humanities for Islamicate Research," *Journal of Digital Islamicate Research* 1, no. 1–2 (2024): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.1163/27732363-20240002>.

⁴⁴ Giulia Evolvi, "Religion and the Internet: Digital Religion, (Hyper)Mediated Spaces, and Materiality," *Zeitschrift Für Religion, Gesellschaft Und Politik* 6 (2022): 9–25, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41682-021-00087-9>.

⁴⁵ Aliyu Alhaji Rabi'u, Ahmad Murad Mohd Noor Merican, and Ghadah Al Murshid, "Ethics in The Digital Age: Exploring The Ethical Challenges of Technology," *Journal of Information Systems and Digital Technologies* 7, no. 1 (2025): 29–50.

Contemporary *ijtihād* in the context of digital civilisation

The development of digital civilisation has significantly transformed the landscape of production, distribution, and legitimacy of religious knowledge, including the practice of *ijtihād*. Whereas in the classical period *ijtihād* was positioned as an intellectual activity of scholars grounded in scholarly authority and the methodology of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, in the context of digital civilization, *ijtihād* encounters new realities such as open access to information, the rapid circulation of religious discourse, and the emergence of digital religious authority. This transformation necessitates the redefinition of *ijtihād* as an interpretive process that is not solely text-based but also attentive to technological dynamics and the global social context.⁴⁶

In the realm of interpreting Islamic legal sources, digital civilisation presents both opportunities and epistemological challenges. The digitisation of classical manuscripts, hadith databases, and online fatwa platforms has expanded access to authoritative Islamic sources. Conversely, digital algorithms and the phenomenon of echo chambers have the potential to shape interpretive bias and fragment religious authority. Consequently, contemporary *ijtihād* must incorporate technological awareness as an integral part of the epistemological process of Islamic legal reasoning in order to avoid succumbing to textual reductionism or technological determinism.⁴⁷

The *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* approach provides a crucial foundation for formulating contemporary *ijtihād* in the digital era. Through the *maqāṣid* framework, *ijtihād* functions not only as a mechanism for legal derivation but also as an ethical instrument for safeguarding human welfare amid global digital transformation. This approach enables Islamic law to address emerging issues such as artificial intelligence ethics, data privacy, and digital religious authority without compromising its normative legitimacy.⁴⁸

Moreover, contemporary *ijtihād* in digital civilisation necessitates collaborative and interdisciplinary models. The complexity of modern problems, ranging from digital technology to the global environmental crisis, cannot be effectively addressed through purely normative legal approaches. Therefore, synergy is required between religious scholars, social scientists, technology experts, and public policymakers. This model aligns with the development of modern *maqāṣid* discourse, which emphasises the collective and global dimensions of human welfare.⁴⁹

Ultimately, contemporary *ijtihād* in digital civilisation does not represent a rupture from classical tradition, but rather an adaptive continuation of the historical dynamism of Islamic law. By integrating textual authority, technological awareness, and sensitivity to social context, *ijtihād* can maintain its relevance in guiding modern Muslim life. In this framework, digital civilisation is not merely an external challenge to Islamic law, but also a new space for

⁴⁶ Khamis, "Review of Hashtag Islam: How Cyber-Islamic Environments Are Transforming Religious Authority," by Gary R. Bunt."

⁴⁷ Mohammad Takdir, "Contestation and the Roles of Islam in The Public Sphere: A Sociological Analysis of Religious Secularization in Indonesia and the West," *Afkaruna: Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies* 16, no. 2 (2020): 154–74, <https://doi.org/10.18196/AIJIS.2020.0119.154-174>.

⁴⁸ Qureshi, "Understanding Sharia Law: Principles and Application."

⁴⁹ Deri Wanto, Rahmad Hidayat, and R. Repelita, "Maqasid Shariahâ€™s Change As Theory: From Classical to Cotemporary Maqasid Shariah," *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam* 6, no. 2 (2021): 427–54, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jhi.v6i2.3122>.

revitalising Islamic legal interpretive methodologies in ways that are more responsive, ethical, and oriented towards global human welfare.⁵⁰

Contemporary *ijtihād* in digital civilisation should be understood as a transformative yet continuous evolution of Islamic legal reasoning, rather than a departure from its classical foundations. The integration of technological awareness, *maqāṣid*-oriented ethics, and interdisciplinary collaboration demonstrates that the vitality of *ijtihād* lies in its capacity to respond critically to new epistemic conditions while preserving its normative integrity. Digital civilisation thus functions not only as a source of disruption but also as a productive space that challenges scholars to refine methodological rigor, expand ethical considerations, and rearticulate legal authority in more inclusive and globally relevant ways. Consequently, the future of Islamic legal interpretation depends on the ability of *ijtihād* to harmonise tradition and innovation, ensuring that it remains both authoritative and responsive to the complex realities of contemporary Muslim societies.

A typology of contemporary *ijtihād* in digital civilisation

To better theorise contemporary *ijtihād* within the context of digital civilisation, this research develops a typological framework explaining how Islamic legal reasoning functions through the interaction of textual authority, technological mediation, and socio-historical realities. Digital transformation should not be reduced to a mere technological shift; rather, it represents a structural transformation in epistemology, religious authority, and interpretive methodology. The expansion of digital knowledge environments has reshaped how legal knowledge is accessed, validated, and disseminated, thereby necessitating a re-examination of the traditional boundaries of *ijtihād*.⁵¹

Within this framework, contemporary *ijtihād* can be categorised into four interconnected yet analytically distinguishable forms. The first is text-oriented *ijtihād*, which reflects the continuation of classical Islamic legal methodology, where the Qur'an, Sunnah, and established juristic tradition remain the primary sources of legal reasoning. In the digital era, this form of *ijtihād* benefits from unprecedented accessibility to digitised manuscripts, online hadith repositories, and comparative madhhab resources. However, the digital environment also creates risks of fragmented textual consumption and selective interpretation. Consequently, contemporary jurists must reinforce methodological discipline to ensure continuity with normative legal traditions despite the pressures of information overload.⁵²

The second form is context-sensitive *ijtihād*, which emphasises the dynamic engagement between legal texts and evolving socio-cultural realities. Digital civilisation has introduced new ethical and legal concerns, including data privacy, artificial intelligence governance, digital religious authority, and virtual social interaction. This approach recognises that Islamic legal interpretation must respond to changing human experiences while maintaining fidelity to its normative foundations. In this perspective, context is not viewed as a threat to textual

⁵⁰ Ian A. Morrison, "Citizenship and Secularisation(S)," *Citizenship Studies* 24, no. 1 (2020): 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2019.1700916>.

⁵¹ Heidi A Campbell and Farah Rule Rule, "The Practice of Digital Religion," in *Handbuch Soziale Praktiken Und Digitale Alltagswelten*, ed. H Friese et al. (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2020), 363–371, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-08357-1_38.

⁵² Tajdin, "Sharī'a as State Law: An Analysis of 'allāl Al-Fāṣī's Concept of The Objectives of Islamic Law."

authority but as a necessary interpretive space through which the objectives of Islamic law can be realised in contemporary society.⁵³

The third form is technology-mediated *ijtihād*, which reflects the increasing role of digital tools, artificial intelligence, and algorithmic infrastructures in facilitating legal research and comparative jurisprudence. While digital technologies enhance accessibility and analytical capacity, they also introduce new layers of epistemic mediation that may influence knowledge production and the formation of religious authority. Therefore, it is essential to maintain a critical distinction between technological assistance and normative legal judgment. Artificial intelligence may support pattern recognition and data retrieval, but it cannot substitute human ethical reasoning, theological responsibility, and moral accountability within Islamic legal decision-making.⁵⁴

The fourth and most integrative form is *maqāṣid*-oriented holistic *ijtihād*, which synthesises textual fidelity, contextual awareness, and technological literacy within the broader objectives of Islamic law. Through *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, Islamic legal reasoning expands beyond technical jurisprudence towards ethical and civilisational responsibility. This approach enables Islamic law to respond to complex global challenges, including environmental crises, digital ethics, and social justice, by prioritising human welfare, sustainability, and moral accountability. In this sense, *maqāṣid*-based ~~*ijtihād*~~ *ijtihād* provides a normative framework that connects Islamic legal reasoning with broader global ethical discourses.⁵⁵

Overall, this typological framework contributes to contemporary Islamic legal scholarship by reconceptualising *ijtihād* not merely as a technical juristic method but as a broader civilisational interpretive paradigm. It offers a model for understanding how Islamic legal authority can remain textually grounded, socially responsive, and technologically informed while preserving its normative integrity. This reconceptualisation is essential for ensuring the continued relevance of Islamic legal thought in an increasingly digital and interconnected world.⁵⁶

Contemporary *ijtihād* should be understood as a multilayered and adaptive epistemic process that operates through the dynamic interaction of text, context, and technology rather than through a single methodological lens. The proposed typology demonstrates that the strength of Islamic legal reasoning lies in its capacity to balance continuity and innovation—preserving textual authority while engaging critically with socio-technological transformations. Among these forms, *maqāṣid*-oriented holistic *ijtihād* emerges as the most comprehensive paradigm, capable of integrating methodological rigour with ethical responsiveness and global relevance. Consequently, this typological model not only clarifies the evolving nature of *ijtihād* in digital civilization but also provides a strategic direction for future scholarship, ensuring that Islamic legal thought remains coherent, authoritative, and capable of addressing complex contemporary challenges.

⁵³ Elmahjub, "Islamic Jurisprudence as an Ethical Discourse: An Enquiry into the Nature of Moral Reasoning in Islamic Legal Theory."

⁵⁴ A. Morrison, "Citizenship and Secularisation(S)."

⁵⁵ Muhammad Nazir Alias et al., "Scientific Approach as The Basis for The Formation of Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'ah Concept and Principles: A Comparative Study," *Malaysian Journal of Syariah and Law* 12, no. 2 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.33102/mjsl.vol12no2.568>.

⁵⁶ Campbell and Evolvi, "Contextualizing Current Digital Religion Research on Emerging Technologies."

Implications of the integration of text, technology, and context in Islamic legal thought

The integration of text, technology, and context carries significant epistemological implications for contemporary Islamic legal thought. It promotes a shift from a legalistic approach focused on the literal wording of texts towards a reflective approach that considers the purposes, processes, and social impacts of law. Modern Islamic legal thought must reconstruct its epistemological framework to respond to the complexities of modern life without becoming detached from the normative foundations of revelation.⁵⁷ In this sense, integration functions as a strategy of methodological renewal that strengthens the adaptive capacity of Islamic law.

From the perspective of *ijtihād* methodology, the integration of technology and contextual analysis expands the tools of Islamic legal reasoning. The use of empirical data, social analysis, and digital technologies as auxiliary instruments allows for the enrichment of methods of legal deduction (*istinbāt*) without abandoning the principles of Islamic legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*). Contemporary *ijtihād* demands methodological flexibility that remains rooted in the classical normative framework. This implication indicates that Islamic legal thought needs to be multidimensional, combining textual rigor, contextual awareness, and proportional technological support.⁵⁸

The integration of text, technology, and context also affects the redefinition of scholarly authority in Islamic law. On the one hand, technology broadens access to scholarly sources. On the other hand, a plural and participatory social context demands public accountability for legal outputs. Modern religious authority is constructed through a combination of scholarly competence, social relevance, and the ability to communicate in public spaces. Therefore, contemporary Islamic legal thought must reformulate the concept of authority in order to remain credible amid the decentralisation of knowledge and the fragmentation of religious authority.

The most fundamental implication of this integration is the strengthening of ethical and purposive orientations in Islamic legal thought. The *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* approach is increasingly prominent as the primary evaluative framework for assessing the validity and applicability of law, emphasising justice, public welfare (*maṣlaḥah*), and the protection of human dignity.⁵⁹ In a global context, this approach also opens space for dialogue between Islamic law and international legal and ethical discourses.⁶⁰ The integration of text, technology, and context enables Islamic legal thought to develop adaptively and creatively, without losing its normative identity and ethical commitments.⁶¹

In light of these implications, the integration of text, technology, and context represents not merely a methodological adjustment but a fundamental reorientation of contemporary

⁵⁷ Ahmad Agbaria, "Reforming Modernity: Ethics and the New Human in the Philosophy of Abdurrahman Taha," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 47, no. 3 (2020): 497–99, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13530194.2020.1763128>.

⁵⁸ Faizi and Ali, "The Core Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence within Legal Theory: A Comprehensive Analysis."

⁵⁹ Faizi and Ali.

⁶⁰ Abdulrauf Atia, Karima Elhaj Elhaj, and Raden Rudi Alhemp, "Islamic Law and Human Rights Revisited: Toward a Transformative Framework for Harmonization in the 21st Century," *Journal of Contemporary Islamic Law and Studies* 1, no. 1 (2025): 1–14, <https://doi.org/10.47353/jcils.v1i1.367>.

⁶¹ Muhammad Akhtar, Muhammad Atif Aslam Rao, and Doğan Kaplan, "Islamic Intellectualism Versus Modernity: Attempts to Formulate Coherent Counter Narrative," *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization* 13, no. 1 (2023): 257–69, <https://doi.org/10.32350/jitc.131.18>.

Islamic legal thought towards a more holistic, reflective, and ethically grounded paradigm. This integration underscores that the future viability of Islamic law depends on its ability to harmonise normative fidelity with epistemological openness, allowing it to engage critically with technological advancements and complex social realities. By situating *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* at the centre of this transformation, Islamic legal reasoning is better equipped to ensure that legal outcomes remain just, humane, and socially relevant. Consequently, this integrative approach reaffirms Islamic law as a dynamic and adaptive system capable of contributing meaningfully to both internal Muslim discourses and broader global ethical conversations.

Conclusion

This article concludes that an interpretive model of Islamic law pertinent to the digital era must be constructed through a balanced integration of text, technology, and social context. The methodological heritage of the *uṣūlī* tradition continues to serve as the primary normative and methodological foundation that ensures rigor in textual reading and discipline in legal reasoning, while contemporary social context provides the applicative horizon that guarantees the relevance and utility of Islamic law in addressing real human problems. Simultaneously, digital technology must be positioned ethically and responsibly as a supporting instrument that expands human analytical capacity, rather than as a substitute for the authority of Islamic juristic reasoning (*ijtihād*). Through this integrative approach, Islamic legal interpretation can maintain its scholarly authority, remain adaptive to changing times, and continue to be oriented towards the objectives of public welfare and justice that lie at the heart of Islamic law.

The novelty of this study lies in proposing a systematic integrative framework that unites Islamic legal theory (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), digital epistemology, and *maqāṣid*-based ethics into a coherent model of “digital *ijtihād*”, surpassing fragmented approaches that treat text, technology, and context separately. It contributes scientifically by reconceptualising *ijtihād* as a multidimensional and adaptive process capable of engaging contemporary technological realities without compromising normative rigor. Future research may further develop this framework through empirical studies on digital fatwa practices, algorithmic governance, and the role of artificial intelligence in shaping Islamic legal authority across diverse socio-cultural settings.

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