

The Islamic Ethical Principles and *Maqasid al-Shariah* to Enhance Digital Competency Among Adolescents

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Abstract

Modern advancements, including computers, smart devices, high-speed internet and generative artificial intelligence, have made technology an integral part of adolescents' daily lives. The digital age has significantly transformed how they engage with technology, reshaping the ways they learn, communicate and interact. As digital environment become essential to their social and educational development, the need for digital competency has grown. However, digital competency should go beyond technical skills, incorporating ethical decision-making, identities and responsible online behavior. This article explores the integration of the Islamic ethical and *Maqasid al-Shariah* (the objectives of Islamic law) framework to enhance digital competency among adolescents. By focusing on the core Islamic principles such as *adab* (proper conduct), *amanah* (trustworthiness), *ihsan* (excellence) and *niyyah* (intention). The article demonstrates how these values guide adolescents in engaging with digital technologies responsibly. Furthermore, the objectives of the *Maqasid al-Shariah* focus on the preservation of religion (*din*), life (*nafs*), intellect (*aql*), lineage (*nasl*) and property (*mal*) will provide a holistic approach that ensures digital practices promote the well-being of individuals and society. This framework encourages adolescents to use digital platforms ethically, protect their personal integrity, rights, responsibilities, well-being and contribute positively to the community. The article highlights how aligning digital behavior with these Islamic values fosters both technical proficiency and a sense of social responsibility. Ultimately, holistic Islamic ethical principles and *Maqasid al-Shariah* into digital literacy education supports the personal, social and spiritual growth of adolescents. Thus, promoting a balanced approach to digital engagement that contributes to the broader goals of Islamic ethics and societal well-being.

Keywords: Islamic Ethical, *Maqasid al-Shariah*, Digital Competency, Adolescents.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The digital age has reshaped communication, education and social interactions for adolescents. With the rapid advancement of technology, digital competency has become a vital skill for manoeuvring the online world. However, as adolescents interact with digital technologies, they often face challenges that include exposure to harmful content, cyberbullying and ethical dilemmas related to privacy and respect (Reid et al., 2016). The influence of digital media extends beyond education and entertainment, shaping adolescents' perceptions, behaviors and interactions with others. As a result, their ability to critically assess and ethically engage with digital platforms is becoming an essential component of modern digital literacy.

Digital competencies encompass the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary for individuals to engage effectively, ethically and responsibly with digital technologies. In an increasingly interconnected world, these competencies serve as foundational tools for navigating digital environments and binding their potential for communication, collaboration, learning and problem-solving. For instance, models and frameworks such as digital competency (Ferrari, 2012) and digital citizenship (Ribble, 2015) are illustrated in Figures 1 and 2 respectively.

Dimension 1		Dimension 2	Dimension 3
5 Areas		21 Competencies	Competence Levels
AREA		COMPETENCE	
Core	1. INFORMATION	1.1 Browsing, searching and filtering information 1.2 Evaluating information 1.3 Managing information and digital content	
	2. COMMUNICATION	2.1 Interacting through digital technologies 2.2 Sharing through digital technologies 2.3 Engaging in citizenship through digital tech 2.4 Collaborating through digital technologies 2.5 Netiquette 2.6 Managing digital identity	
	3. CONTENT CREATION	3.1 Developing digital content 3.2 Integrating and re-elaborating digital content 3.3 Copyright and licenses 3.4 Programming	
Transversals	4. SAFETY	4.1 Protecting devices 4.2 Protecting personal data and privacy 4.3 Protecting health and well-being 4.4 Protecting the environment	
	5. PROBLEM SOLVING	5.1 Solving technical problems 5.2 Identifying needs and tech. responses 5.3 Creatively using digital technologies 5.4 Identifying digital competence gaps	

Figure 1 Digital Competency (Ferrari, 2012)

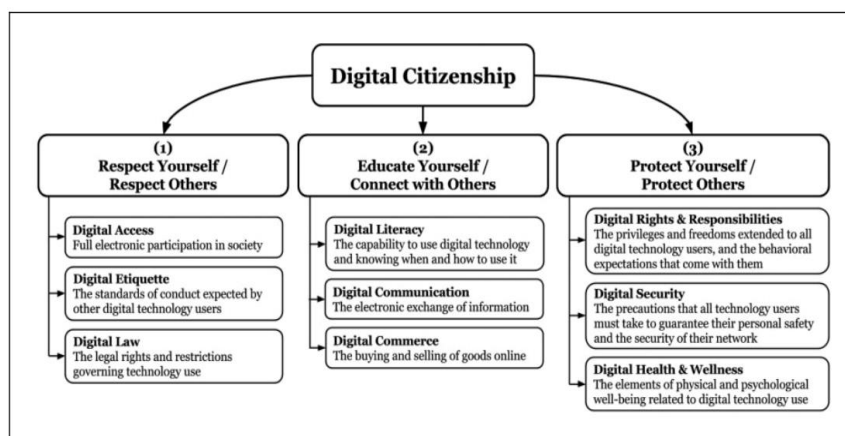


Figure 2 Digital Citizenship (Ribble, 2012)

At the core of digital competencies lies technical proficiency, which includes the ability to use devices, applications and software effectively. However, beyond technical skills, digital competency demands critical thinking and information literacy, enabling individuals to locate, evaluate and use digital information judiciously in a world often overloaded with misinformation (Roosenbeek et al., 2022; Calvani et al., 2012). Moreover, competencies extend to digital communication and collaboration, where users must navigate diverse and virtual environments with cultural sensitivity and effective teamwork strategies (Van Laar et al., 2020). With the increasing role of artificial intelligence (AI) and automation in digital interactions, digital competency must also include an awareness of algorithmic biases, ethical artificial intelligence (AI) use and the responsible consumption of AI-generated content.

Equally important is the integration of digital competency is understanding and implementing online safety and security measures. This includes protecting personal information, recognizing and mitigating risks such as cyberbullying or identity theft and fostering safe online spaces (Livingstone & Helsper, 2007). Adolescents must also develop emotional intelligence and digital well-being strategies to maintain healthy relationships and prevent digital overuse, which can contribute to social isolation and mental health issues. Another key aspect of digital competency is ethical digital behavior, which requires an understanding of the societal impacts of one's online actions, respect for intellectual property and adherence to online etiquette (Ribble et al., 2011).

Digital competency is not static; rather, it is a dynamic construct that requires adaptability and a commitment to lifelong learning. As technologies evolve rapidly, they demand continuous skill refinement, as well as the development of critical thinking and innovation (Ilomäki et al., 2016). While digital competency offers immense opportunities, inequalities in access and skill acquisition must be addressed to prevent widening digital divides, emphasizing the need for equitable and inclusive digital education initiatives (Van Deursen & Van Dijk, 2014). Thus, digital competency is a multidimensional construct that integrates technical expertise, critical awareness and ethical responsibility, making it a basis of modern education and societal development as shown in Figure 3.

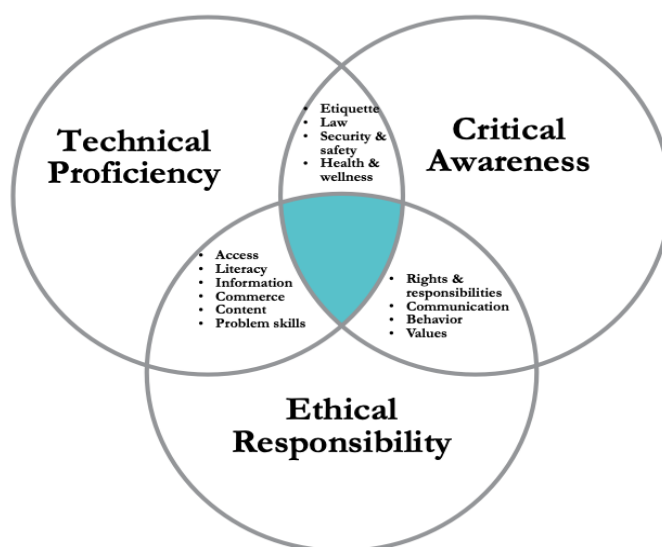


Figure 3 Multidimensional of Digital Competency

Thus, digital competency is a multidimensional construct that integrates technical expertise, critical awareness and ethical responsibility, making it a basis of modern education and societal development (Figure 3). Despite this importance, existing frameworks, including digital competency as described by Ferrari (2012) and digital citizenship according to Ribble (2015), primarily focus on technical skills and social engagement, while often overlooking religious and ethical considerations, particularly those grounded in an Islamic worldview (Yusuf, 2021).

Moreover, the current frameworks largely emphasize cognitive and technical skills, problem skills and media literacy. However, they often overlook the moral and spiritual dimensions that guide ethical decision-making, indicating that existing frameworks focus primarily on technical proficiency without adequately addressing moral considerations. Recent findings by Altinsoy and Boyraz (2024) show that while students may demonstrate high levels of digital literacy that reflecting strong technical competence. However, their understanding and application of ethical values in digital environments remain moderate. The lack of emphasis on ethics in digital education can lead adolescents to be highly skilled with technology but struggling with dilemmas related to digital honesty, privacy and responsible content sharing. Consequently, the lack of ethical grounding in digital competency frameworks may increase the risk of harmful behaviors, including unethical content sharing, cyber exploitation and digital addiction. This highlights the critical need for frameworks that integrate moral and spiritual principles into digital competency education, ensuring that adolescents are equipped not only with technical proficiency but also with the ethical guidance necessary for responsible online engagement.

Islamic ethical teachings offer a valuable perspective to address this gap. By emphasizing responsible behavior and ethical decision-making, principles such as *adab* (proper conduct), *amanah* (trustworthiness), *ihsan* (excellence) and *niyyah* (intention) provide a comprehensive structure for digital engagement. Incorporating these values into digital literacy programs promotes honesty, respect, accountability, and digital mindfulness. Such integration ensures that adolescents develop both technical skills and ethical awareness, enabling them to navigate digital technologies in ways that align with Islamic teachings.

In response to this gap, it is essential to advance a holistic framework that embeds Islamic ethical principles and the higher objectives of the *Maqasid al-Shariah* into digital competency. By grounding digital engagement in this moral compass, educators and policymakers can nurture

adolescents who are not only digitally skilled but also ethically conscious and spiritually anchored. Moving beyond mere technical proficiency, this integration fosters accountability, empathy and moral integrity, equipping young people to make ethical, responsible and value-driven choices in the complex digital world. Accordingly, this article aims to explore how Islamic principles and the *Maqasid al-Shariah* can be meaningfully incorporated into digital competency frameworks to empower adolescents as ethically and digitally competent citizens.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

This article employs a conceptual and analytical approach to investigate the integration of Islamic ethical principles into digital competency frameworks for adolescents. To provide a balanced foundation, the analysis first engages with established digital literacy and competency models that have informed both educational practice and policy development. Early educationally oriented frameworks such as Digital Citizenship (Ribble, 2012) and Digital Competency (Ferrari, 2012) emphasise the role of schools and educators in equipping young people with responsible digital habits, critical thinking and ethical awareness. These works highlight the importance of preparing learners to navigate digital environments safely and responsibly within educational settings.

Building on this foundation, broader frameworks have been developed to provide structured and transferable models of digital competency. For instance, the European Commission's DigComp framework (Carretero et al., 2017) identifies five key areas of competence: (1) information and data literacy, (2) communication and collaboration (3) digital content creation (4) safety and (5) problem-solving. The ISTE Standards for Educators (ISTE, 2016) extend the focus beyond technical skills to transformative pedagogy, positioning educators as facilitators, designers, digital citizens and knowledge constructors. At a global level, the UNESCO Digital Literacy Global Framework (Law et al., 2018) offers benchmarks that align digital competencies with lifelong learning and global citizenship.

Together, these models provide a comprehensive overview of digital competency, ranging from classroom-based applications to internationally recognised policy frameworks. However, while they address technical and cognitive skills, they often underemphasise ethical, cultural and spiritual dimensions. To address this gap, this study critically examines these frameworks alongside Islamic ethical principles derived from the Qur'an, Hadith, and contemporary scholarship on Islamic education (Hashim, 2014; Yusuf, 2021). Values such as *adab* (proper conduct), *amanah* (trustworthiness), *ihsan* (excellence) and *niyyah* (intention) are positioned within the broader objectives of *Maqasid al-Shariah*, which emphasise the preservation of religion (*din*), life (*nafs*), intellect (*aqal*), lineage (*nasl*) and property (*mal*).

By synthesising insights from both established digital literacy frameworks and Islamic ethical principles, the methodology proposes a holistic model of digital competency that integrates technical proficiency, ethical responsibility and spiritual grounding to prepare adolescents for responsible digital engagement and meaningful personal growth.

3.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the core conceptual findings derived from the exploration of Islamic ethical principles and the *Maqasid al-Shariah* framework in relation to digital competency among adolescents. The main objective of this article is to explore the integration of the Islamic ethical and *Maqasid al-Shariah* (the objectives of Islamic law) framework to enhance digital competency among adolescents, particularly for Muslim learners navigating a rapidly evolving digital

environment. By aligning spiritual, moral and intellectual dimensions with contemporary digital skills, the aim is to cultivate responsible, conscientious and value-driven digital engagement.

3.1 The Islamic Ethical Principles Framework

The Islamic ethical framework, grounded in the Al-Qur'an and Hadith, offers comprehensive guidance on human behavior, emphasizing the importance of justice, integrity and compassion. The four selected concepts, namely *adab* (proper conduct), *amanah* (trustworthiness), *ihسان* (excellence) and *niyyah* (intention) as shown in Figure 4, are drawn from classical and contemporary Islamic scholarship, where they are consistently emphasised as ethical principles central to personal conduct and education. For instance, Al-Ghazali in *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* highlights the role of *adab* and *niyyah* in guiding moral behaviour and emphasises *amanah* as a foundation of ethical responsibility. Likewise, the concept of *ihسان* is rooted in the Sahih Muslim, where it is described as striving for excellence with sincerity. Contemporary scholars such as Al-Attas (1991) and Hashim (2014) extend these values into the context of education, positioning them as essential to cultivating holistic ethical competency. These principles were selected not subjectively but because they directly align with the ethical challenges of digital engagement, such as respectful interaction (*adab*), integrity in information use (*amanah*), striving for beneficial outcomes (*ihسان*) and conscious purpose (*niyyah*).



Figure 4 The Islamic Ethical Principles

These principles when applied to the digital era, can guide adolescents in making ethical decisions while engaging with digital technologies. Firstly, *adab* (proper conduct) refers to the respectful and dignified behaviour expected in all interactions. In Islamic thought, *adab* goes beyond simple etiquette; it embodies moral discipline and the recognition of one's responsibilities towards God, oneself and others (Wan Daud, 1998). Applied to online behavior, such as how one communicates, treats others and navigates digital spaces, should reflect *adab* (Ghazali, 2015). Encouraging adolescents to treat others online with respect aligns with Islamic values of empathy and kindness. The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of good conduct in numerous verses, such as:

"And speak to people good [words]." (Qur'an 2:83)

This verse underscores the importance of using kind and respectful language, which is especially relevant in online communication where anonymity can sometimes lead to harsh or disrespectful behavior. For instance of *adab* in Digital Communication: Avoiding Hate Speech and Trolling: Online platforms often become breeding grounds for hate speech, trolling, and cyberbullying. *Adab* teaches adolescents to refrain from engaging in such behavior and to treat others with respect, even in the face of disagreement. For example, instead of responding to a provocative post with anger, a Muslim adolescent should respond with patience and kindness, as the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

"The strong is not the one who overcomes the people by his strength, but the strong is the one who controls himself while in anger." (Sahih Bukhari)

Verses 18 and 19 of Surah Luqman provide exemplary advise from a father to his son regarding the need of upholding proper *adab* in interactions with others.

"And do not turn your nose up to people, nor walk pridefully upon the earth. Surely Allah does not like whoever is arrogant, boastful. Be moderate in your pace. And lower your voice, for the ugliest of all voices is certainly the braying of donkeys." (Qur'an 18-19:31)

Avoiding Spreading Rumors: The Qur'an explicitly condemns spreading false information:

"O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm a people out of ignorance and become, over what you have done, regretful." (Qur'an 49:6)

Adolescents should verify information before sharing it online, ensuring that they do not contribute to the spread of misinformation or harm others unintentionally. For example a case study in 2020, widely circulated social media claimed that a variety of foods such as rice and cookies in Sydney were contaminated with COVID-19 (AFP Fact Check, 2020). These claims were later officially dismissed by NSW Health, yet they nonetheless caused fear and confusion. Many users shared the post without verifying its authenticity, leading to widespread panic and financial losses for the company. A Muslim adolescent who adheres to the principle of *adab* would have investigated the claim before sharing it, thereby avoiding harm to others (Brennen et al., 2020; Islam at el., 2025).

Adab encompasses the preservation of societal and personal boundaries in the utilization of technology. Islam emphasizes the significance of these restrictions to ensure the fulfillment of technology's intended purpose. Moreover, we are currently confronted with numerous cyber risks, including personal data breaches and rampant pornographic issues.

Secondly, *amanah* (trustworthiness) refers to fulfilling one's responsibilities with honesty and integrity, a value consistently highlighted in Islamic scholarship as foundational to ethical behaviour (Al-Ghazali, 2008). Additionally, *amanah* as a fundamental moral obligation essential for sustaining social harmony which highlights it as a key virtue underpinning just and ethical conduct. In the digital context, this involves respecting privacy, maintaining the integrity of information shared online and avoiding plagiarism or dishonesty in online activities (Rashid et al., 2017). The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of trustworthiness in the following verse:

"Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due." (Qur'an 4:58)

This verse highlights the obligation to protect and respect the trust placed in individuals, whether it involves personal data, intellectual property, or confidential information. For examples of *amanah* in Digital Behavior: Protecting Personal Data where adolescents should be mindful of the personal information they share online and take steps to protect their data from misuse. This includes using strong passwords, enabling two-factor authentication and being cautious about sharing sensitive information on social media.

Thus, the Qur'an admonishes against the betrayal bestowed in the word of Allah, meaning:

"O believers! Do not betray Allah and the Messenger, nor betray your trusts knowingly". (Qur'an 4:58)

Next, Respecting Intellectual Property where *amanah* also extends to respecting the intellectual property of others. This means avoiding piracy, plagiarism and unauthorized use of digital content. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

"The rights of every person will be restored to him on the Day of Resurrection, even the rights of the sheep without horns from the sheep with horns." (Sabih Muslim)

This Hadith highlights the importance of respecting the rights of others, including their intellectual property. In 2019, Jerry Media, a popular social media firm, was accused of plagiarising smaller creators by reposting comedians' tweets without attribution. This breach of trust sparked widespread public criticism and damaged its reputation (Shamsian, 2019). This violation of *amanah* (trustworthiness) not only damaged the influencer's reputation but also led to legal consequences. A Muslim adolescent who adheres to the principle of *amanah* (trustworthiness) would ensure that they give proper credit to the original creators of any content they use or share.

Thirdly, *Ihsan* (excellence) emphasizes performing actions with both outward excellence and inward sincerity (Al-Ghazali, 2008). For adolescents, applying *ihsan* (excellence) to digital competency means approaching digital tools and platforms with the intent to learn, create, and contribute positively rather than engaging in harmful or wasteful behavior (Rahman, 2019). The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of excellence in the following verse:

"And do good; indeed, Allah loves the doers of good." (Qur'an 2:195)

This principle encourages Muslims to strive for excellence in all their actions, including their use of digital technologies. For examples of *Ihsan* in digital behavior focusing on the aspect of Creating Educational Content where Adolescents can use their digital skills to create educational content, such as tutorials, videos or blogs that benefit others. Thus, Muslim adolescents with coding skills could create a website that teaches others how to code, thereby contributing to the intellectual growth of the community.

To elaborate further, Using Technology for Community Service where adolescents can use digital tools to organize community service projects, such as online fundraisers or virtual volunteering opportunities. This aligns with the Islamic value of serving others and contributing to the well-being of society. In a case study, for example during the COVID-19 pandemic, a group of Muslim adolescents created an online platform to connect volunteers with elderly individuals who needed help with grocery shopping and other errands. This initiative exemplified *ihsan* (excellence) by using digital technology to serve the community during a time of crisis.

Lastly, *Niyyah* (intention) is an ethics of actions are judged based on the sincerity of one's intentions. Teaching adolescents to reflect on their digital actions and the motivations behind them helps foster a sense of accountability and mindfulness in their online behavior (Al-Farabi, 2014). The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

"Actions are judged by intentions, and every person will be rewarded according to what they intended." (Sahih Bukhari)

In the digital context, *niyyah* (intention) encourages adolescents to reflect on their motivations for using technology and to ensure that their actions are aligned with ethical and Islamic values. For instance, of *niyyah* (intention) in Digital Behavior demonstrate on Sharing Information where adolescents need to know and confirmed the news before sharing a post or article online, adolescents should reflect on their intention. Are they sharing it to inform and benefit others, or are they doing it to gain likes and attention? A good intention ensures that the action is morally sound, even if the outcome is not as expected.

Meanwhile, Engaging in Online Debates to highlight when participating in online discussions or debates, adolescents should examine their intentions. Are they engaging in the debate to seek truth and understanding, or are they simply trying to win an argument? The Qur'an advises below which encourages Muslims to engage in debates with respect and good intentions:

"And do not argue with the People of the Scripture except in a way that is best." (Qur'an 29:46)

For example, in a case study back in 2021, a Muslim teenager's well-intended social media post about a charitable cause went viral, illustrating how sincere *niyyah* (intention) can generate positive outcomes in digital spaces. In the context of digital competency, *niyyah* functions as an ethical compass guiding the application of knowledge, skills and attitudes online. Islamic scholarship affirms its centrality of *niyyah* is a foundation of moral action (Abdurezak Abdulahi, 2016), the basis of religious life in classical thought (Mujiburrahman, 2011), a principle of workplace ethics (Omar & Mohd Desa, 2023) and a core element of financial ethics (Alwi et al., 2021). Embedding *niyyah* into digital competency ensures digital practices remain both proficient and ethically grounded.

In conclusion, the core principles of the Islamic ethical framework of *adab* (proper conduct), *amanah* (trustworthiness), *ihسان* (excellence) and *niyyah* (intention) in the Figure 1 and the elaboration above have provide a strong foundation for guiding adolescents' behavior in the digital world. By adhering to these principles, adolescents can navigate the complexities of digital technologies in a way that promotes ethical behavior, social responsibility and personal growth. Real-life case studies further illustrate how these principles can be applied in practice, offering valuable lessons for adolescents as they engage with digital platforms.

3.2 Integrating *Maqasid al-Shariah* in Digital Competency

While the Islamic ethical framework provides specific guidelines for individual actions, the principles of *Maqasid al-Shariah* broaden this scope to ensure that all actions contribute to the welfare of society and the protection of fundamental human rights as illustrated in Figure 5. *Maqasid al-Shariah* refers to the overarching objectives of Islamic law, which aim to preserve and promote five key aspects: religion (*din*), life (*nafs*), intellect (*aql*), lineage (*nasl*) and property (*mal*). These objectives can be applied to digital competency to ensure that adolescents' digital behavior contributes to both individual well-being and societal harmony.

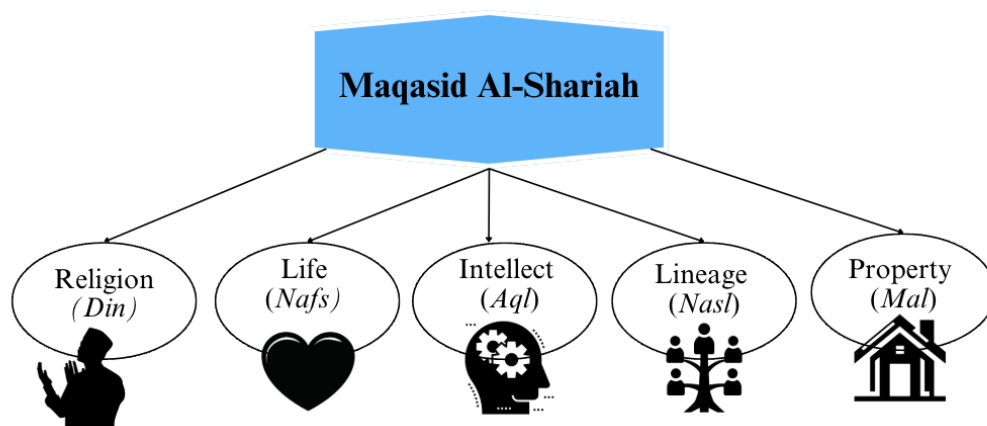


Figure 5 The *Maqasid al-Shariah* Elements

Below, we expand on each *Maqasid al-Shariah* and its application to digital competency.

3.2.1 Religion (*Din*)

In the context of digital competency, preserving religion involves guiding adolescents to use digital technologies in ways that strengthen their faith and avoid exposure to harmful content. Ethical digital practices align with Islamic teachings, encouraging users to seek knowledge, engage in religious discourse, and maintain a positive digital identity that reflects their values. The preservation of religion (*din*) in the digital age involves using technology to strengthen faith while avoiding harmful influences. Digital platforms offer numerous opportunities for religious education and community building, such as online Quranic studies, Islamic apps, and virtual

religious communities. For example, apps like “Muslim Pro” provide prayer times, Quranic recitations and Islamic teachings, making religious knowledge accessible to adolescents worldwide (Meerangani et al., 2023). These tools can help adolescents deepen their understanding of Islam and maintain a strong connection to their faith. However, the digital world also poses risks, such as exposure to extremist ideologies or content that contradicts Islamic values. To mitigate these risks, adolescents must be taught to critically evaluate online content and avoid sources that promote radicalization or misinformation. The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of seeking knowledge where the verse encourages Muslims to seek beneficial knowledge while avoiding harmful or misleading information.

“And say, My Lord, increase me in knowledge.” (Qur'an 20:114)

Additionally, promoting online platforms that foster positive religious discourse and community building can help adolescents engage in meaningful discussions about their faith while adhering to *Maqasid al-Shariah*. Platforms that encourage respectful dialogue and provide access to credible Islamic scholars can create a safe space for adolescents to explore their faith in a supportive environment.

3.2.2 Life (Nafs)

The preservation of Life (*Nafs*) emphasize on digital world can sometimes expose adolescents to harmful behaviors, such as cyberbullying or online radicalization. Research indicates that cyberbullying is prevalent among adolescents, with victimization rates ranging from 13.99% to 57.5% (Li et al., 2024; Neuman, 2022). This exposure is associated with increased risks of mental health issues, including depression and suicidal ideation (John et al., 2018; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010). By applying the principle of preserving human life (*Nafs*), urges adolescents to protect their mental and physical well-being by engaging in safe online practices, reporting harmful behavior and ensuring their digital spaces are positive and supportive (Nasr, 2017). The Qur'an emphasizes the sanctity of life where this verse stresses the importance of protecting one's life and well-being, both physically and mentally:

“And do not kill the soul which Allah has forbidden, except by right.” (Qur'an 17:33)

Preserving life (*nafs*) in the digital context involves protecting adolescents' mental and physical well-being. Adolescents should be educated about the dangers of cyberbullying and how to report harmful behavior. To address these challenges, adolescents should be encouraged to adopt healthy digital habits, such as limiting screen time and taking regular breaks, to protect their mental and physical well-being. Promoting online platforms that foster positive and supportive interactions can further contribute to the preservation of life in the digital age. For example, platforms that encourage kindness, empathy, and mutual respect can help create a safer and more supportive online environment for adolescents.

3.2.3 Intellect (Aql)

The preservation of Intellect (*Aql*) accentuates those digital technologies offer vast amounts of information. Digital learning tools can engage students and enhance their critical thinking abilities, which are foundational for effective learning (Mugisha et al., 2021). The objective of preserving intellect encourages the responsible consumption of information, ensuring that adolescents use digital platforms to expand their knowledge in beneficial ways, avoid misinformation, and contribute to the intellectual growth of society (Mendelsohn, 2022). However, there are concerns that over-reliance on artificial intelligence (AI) and digital tools may lead to a reduction in critical thinking skills. A study reported potential drawbacks such as diminished

critical thinking, excessive dependence on technology and the spread of misinformation when students rely heavily on AI dialogue systems (Zhang & Zhu, 2023).

The Qur'an encourages the use of intellect : *"Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth are signs for a people who reason."* (Qur'an 2:164)

Thus, adolescents need to understand the importance of using reason and critical thinking to navigate the complexities of the digital world. Preserving intellect (*'aql*) in the digital age requires not only promoting responsible information consumption but also cultivating the ability to distinguish between truth and falsehood. In today's era of relativism, post-truth and post-modernism, subjective opinions and misinformation often overshadow objective facts, making critical thinking and discernment essential (Nurfazri et al., 2024). Thus, adolescents should be guided to critically evaluate online information, avoid misinformation and recognise manipulative digital content that undermines intellectual integrity. In addition, they should be encouraged to use digital tools such as online courses or educational apps, not merely for entertainment but for meaningful learning and intellectual growth. Furthermore, digital literacy programmes that emphasise critical thinking and information evaluation are crucial, as they help young people distinguish credible sources from misinformation and apply knowledge responsibly (Ala-Mutka, 2011; Çebi & Reisoglu, 2020). Collectively, such efforts ensure that preserving intellect (*'aql*) in the digital age is not just about acquiring skills but about nurturing wise, ethical and reflective digital citizens.

3.2.4 Lineage (*Nasl*)

The preservation of lineage (*Nasl*) stress out that this element emphasizes the importance of guiding adolescents to engage with social media in ways that uphold family harmony and societal norms. Parents should be aware of the risks associated with unsupervised social media use, which can expose children to potentially harmful content and features (Yoon et al., 2019). For instance, in June 2025, two 14-year-old schoolgirls from Kelantan rode over 500 km to Kulim after meeting a man online and one was allegedly sexually assaulted upon arrival (Malay Mail, 2025). This tragic case illustrates real-world consequences of unsupervised digital behaviors and highlights the urgency of nurturing not only technical competence but also ethical awareness in youth digital engagement.

Conversly, by encouraging respectful online interactions and safeguarding vulnerable adolescents' users from exposure to inappropriate content or exploitation. On the positive side, social media enables Muslims from diverse backgrounds to connect, fostering dialogue, mutual respect and cooperation toward common goals and shared values. This connectivity can promote unity and tolerance within the Muslim community (Zubair & Raquib, 2020). The use of social media aligns with lineage (*Nasl*) by emphasizing the importance of setting clear guidelines with well-defined objectives and consequences (Chowdhury, 2024). Maintaining respect for family, friends and the community is essential in ensuring responsible and ethical digital interactions.

The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of family where adolescents can relate this verse which highlights the importance of maintaining strong family ties and respecting parental guidance.:

"And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination." (Qur'an 31:14)

Additionally, preserving lineage (*Nasl*) in the digital context involves maintaining family harmony and societal norms. Parents should be encouraged to monitor their children's online

activities while respecting their privacy. Adolescents should also be taught to engage in respectful online interactions that uphold family and societal values. Educating adolescents about the risks of unsupervised social media use can further contribute to the preservation of lineage. For example, adolescents should be made aware of the potential dangers of sharing personal information online or engaging with strangers on social media platforms.

3.2.5 Property (*Mal*)

Fifth element is preservation of Property (*Mal*) heighten the digital age has introduced new forms of property, such as intellectual property and personal data. This principle encourages adolescents to respect others' digital property, avoid piracy and ensure that their own digital information is secure and protected from misuse (Rashid et al., 2017). Islamic law recognizes data as property, governed by ownership laws, thereby obligating individuals to protect personal data and respect the data of others (Ebrahim, 2023). Furthermore, Islamic teachings the importance of property and the prohibition of theft or even fraud principles that apply to digital assets as well. Fatwas have affirmed that intellectual property is a form of property protected under Islamic law and its violation is impermissible (Lubis & Kartiwi, 2013). For instance, fatwas issued by bodies such as the Al-Azhar Fatwa Committee and the Dubai Department of Islamic Affairs recognise IP as the “fruit of human efforts,” emphasising that unauthorised use or copying is forbidden, while registration and enforcement of IP rights align with Shari’a principles. In details, the Qur’an prohibits theft and fraud:

“And do not consume one another’s wealth unjustly.” (Qur’an 2:188)

The above verse stresses the importance of respecting others’ property, including digital assets. Therefore, preserving Property (*Mal*) in the digital age involves respecting intellectual property and personal data. Adolescents should be educated about the importance of respecting intellectual property and avoiding piracy. This includes understanding the ethical implications of downloading pirated content or using someone else’s work without permission. Additionally, adolescents should be taught to protect their personal data and respect the data of others. Promoting ethical digital practices that align with Islamic teachings on property rights can further support the preservation of property in the digital age. For example, adolescents should be encouraged to use secure passwords, enable two-factor authentication, and avoid sharing sensitive information online.

4.0 IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The integration of Islamic ethical principles and the *Maqasid al-Shariah* into digital competency education offers a holistic framework that aligns technical skills with moral and spiritual development for Muslim adolescents. Embedding values such as *adab* (proper conduct), *amanah* (trustworthiness), *ihsan* (excellence) and *niyyah* (intention), alongside the *Maqasid al-Shariah* dimensions of religion (*din*), life (*nafs*), intellect (*aqal*), lineage (*nasl*) and property (*mal*), enriches global digital citizenship (Ribble et al., 2011) with culturally grounded ethics. This approach complements 21st-century skills (Trilling & Fadel, 2009) by fostering character, empathy and moral discernment while promoting inclusive, culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010; Nasir et al., 2013). In practice, this means designing curricula that integrate ethical reasoning into digital contexts to addressing issues such as social media ethics, information verification (tabayyun) and cyberbullying, supported by teacher training and policy initiatives that prioritise values-based digital literacy.

However, this model faces limitations. As a conceptual framework, its impact requires empirical validation through classroom interventions or pilot studies. Variations in Islamic jurisprudence and cultural contexts may necessitate adaptation across regions and many educators may lack the training or confidence to deliver Islamic ethics in technology-rich lessons without structured professional development. Furthermore, the rapid evolution of digital technologies demands ongoing reinterpretation of Maqasid-based guidance for emerging platforms such as AI and the metaverse. These challenges highlight the need for continuous research, curriculum refinement, and educator capacity-building to ensure the framework remains relevant, adaptable and impactful.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The integration of Islamic Ethical Principles and *Maqasid al-Shariah* into the framework of digital competency among adolescents is not only timely but essential in today's rapidly evolving digital landscape. Rooted in divine guidance and universal values such as adab (proper conduct), amanah (trustworthiness), ihsan (excellence) and niyyah (intention), this framework provides a holistic approach to digital literacy that transcends technical skills. It shapes character, nurtures ethical discernment and cultivates a sense of responsibility in digital engagement. Through the lens of Islamic Ethical Principles and *Maqasid al-Shariah* seeks to equip educators, parents and policymakers can develop practical interventions and educational models that align digital usage with Islamic moral objectives. This paradigm not only addresses the risks of misinformation, cyberbullying and digital addiction but also promotes the purposeful use of technology for learning, collaboration and social good. By embedding these principles into curricula, community initiatives and digital platforms, we empower adolescents to become not just competent digital users, but ethical digital citizens which grounded in faith, guided by values and prepared to thrive in both the virtual and real worlds.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author(s) declare(s) that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper

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