



Pakistan Journal of Criminal Justice

ISSN: 2958-9363 ISSN (E): 2958-9371

Volume 6, No.4, 2026, 01-13

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.59075/pjcj.v6i4.218>

Journal Homepage: <https://journals.centeriir.org/index.php/pjcj>

E-Governance Practices in Muslim Societies: A Study of Public Administration Through an Islamic Ethical Lens

Dr Zermina Tasleem,^{1*} Dr Moazam Shahwar,² Dr Sohail Ayaz Muhammad³

¹ Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Pakistan,
Email: zerminatasleem@bzu.edu.pk

² Lecturer, Department of Public Administration, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan,
Email: moazam.shahwar@iub.edu.pk

³ Lecturer, Institute of Management Sciences, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Pakistan,
Email: rsohailayaz@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The e-governance boom has brought about drastic changes in the way of administration of people, through reorganizing service delivery, decision making and the relationship between the state and the citizens. Though a lot of studies have been conducted on the technical and managerial aspects of the e-governance, the ethical implications of e-governance are not fully studied especially with respect to Muslim societies where governance is strongly embedded in the religious and moral principles. This paper presents a qualitative, normative evaluation of e-governance in Muslim societies using the Islamic ethical principles. Based on classical and contemporary Islamic literature and drawing on the work of the theory of public administration and digital governance, the paper utilizes the thematic analysis to assess the main ethical aspects of e-governance, such as accountability, transparency, privacy, participation, and social justice. The results show that despite the fact the goals of e-governance as a whole are in line with the Islamic values of justice, social well-being, and responsibility, there exist major ethical contradictions on issues pertaining to data surveillance, digital marginalization, and a lack of moral responsibility. It is the contention of the study that the moral rightness or wrongness of e-governance within the context of Muslim societies is not only based on efficiency or technological development but rather on its adherence to Islamic conceptions of governance especially the end-purposes of maqasid al-shari. The article enhances a more pluralistic and normatively based approach to digital governance and provides insight into the implementation of ethically sensitive e-governance changes in Muslim societies, by incorporating the Islamic ethical theory into the domain of public administration scholarship.

Keywords: E-governance, Public Administration, Islamic Ethics, Muslim Societies, maqasid al-Shariah, Digital Governance



© 2026 The Authors, Published by [Center of Innovation in Interdisciplinary Research \(CIIR\)](#).
This is an Open Access Article under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial 4.0

Article History: Received: 24-04-2026 Accepted: 25-05-2026 Published: 01-06-2026

Corresponding Author's Email: zerminatasleem@bzu.edu.pk

Introduction

The high rate of information and communication technology (ICTs) innovations has fundamentally changed the face of the public administration in the world and brought about what is often referred to as e-governance. E-governance is the methodical application of computer technologies to the activity of the state institutions in order to increase the efficiency of administration, the delivery of the public services, transparency and accountability, and the engagement of citizens in the governmental processes (Heeks, 2006; United Nations, 2022). Unlike the bureaucratic system of administration, e-governance is a transition into digitally mediated, network-based forms of governance that restructure state-citizen relationships and redefine the practice of the exercise of public authority (Fountain, 2001; Dunleavy et al., 2006). With governments becoming more and more dependent on digital platforms, algorithms and data-informed decision-making, the field of public administration has ceased to be only an organization or management sphere but rather an extremely ethical and normative one.

Over the last few years, e-governance has emerged as a key element of reform in the public sector within the Muslim societies, especially in Muslim dominant countries in the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia and southeast Asia. Online citizen services, digital procurement, digital identity programs, and smart government platforms are some of the digital projects that governments in these regions have embraced as a larger part of modernization and development plans (UNDP, 2021). These reforms have been touted as an antidote to corruption, accessibility of services and capacity building within the administration. Nevertheless, even though the technical and developmental aspects of e-governance in Muslim societies have received growing scholarly interest, its ethical aspect, in particular when judged based on the Islamic normative paradigms, has remained largely unexplored.

Ethics have been viewed as one of the pillars of good governance since a long time based on the viewpoint of a public administration. According to classical and contemporary theories of administration, accountability, public interest, transparency, and justice are the values that should be emphasized to legitimize the public authority (Frederickson, 1997). These ethical issues have escalated to data privacy, digital surveillance, algorithmic bias, cybersecurity, favoring of the marginalized groups, and the concentration of informational power within the state in the era of the digital (Mittelstadt et al., 2016; Zuboff, 2019). These issues are especially relevant to e-government infrastructures, where choices of rights and well-being of the citizens are more and more automated and negotiated using digital systems.

Even though there is an increasing appreciation of these ethical issues, much of the current literature in e-governance ethics is anchored on Western liberal forms of philosophy, which are largely based on rights-based, utilitarian or procedural forms of democracies. Although these methods can be useful, they do not reflect the ethical basis of governing Muslim societies where the administration of the population is heavily entangled with religious and moral imperatives based on the Islamic doctrine. Government in Islam is not only a technical activity of the state but a moral responsibility (amanah) towards which the officials of the society and God are responsible (Chapra, 2000). This moral concept of the state power allows differentiating Islamic rule among the value-neutral or purely instrumental forms of management.

Islamic political and administrative philosophy provides a very rich normative tradition that puts stress on justice (adl), consultation (shura), accountability (muhasabah), common good (maslahah) and safeguarding of human dignity. These rules are based on the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad ({Salla Llahu Alayhi WaSallam}) and were medievalized through the institutions of the historical administrative supervision like hisbah; this served as an ethical control and community responsiveness mechanism (Al-Mawardi, 1996; Cook, 2001). Furthermore, the general philosophy of maqasid al-shari'ah (purposes of the Islamic law) offers a broad spectrum of ethical viewpoint to assess the governance systems according to their capability to maintain the basic interests of human beings, such as life, intellect, property, dignity, and social justice (Al-Shatibi, 2005).

The e-governance development within the Muslim societies is a critical area of normative concern as considered in this Islamic ethical perspective. Digital governance technologies can potentially result in increased transparency and efficiency, which would contribute to the Islamic principles of justice and accountability. Meanwhile, they are ethically dangerous and can go against Islamic values, especially in spheres of mass surveillance, abuse of personal data, marginalization of digitally disadvantaged groups, and loss of participatory decision-making. Indicatively, big data collection and surveillance culture can compromise the Islamic principles of privacy and human dignity, and non-transparent algorithmic decision-making can breach the ideals of fairness and responsibility.

Nevertheless, the topicality of these issues, the Islamic ethical analysis has been marginal to the general public administration literature on e-governance. The literature on e-governance in Muslim-majority nations has been inclined towards the issues of implementation, institutional capacity as well as developmental results, using global governance indicators and Western assessment models without involving much of the Islamic normative theory (Ndou, 2004; Heeks, 2006). Consequently, the intersection where e-governance and public administration and Islamic studies interact has a huge gap in the conceptualizations.

This gap is filled in this article which presents an Islamic ethical evaluation of e-governance in Muslim societies. It asserts that e-governance must not be judged on grounds of efficiency or technological advancement but also its moral suitability to the Islamic governance concepts. Through the incorporation of the Islamic ethical ideas in the examination of online governmental administration, the research is aimed at making contribution to a more comprehensive and normative based perception of e-governance. This would not only make the theory of the public administration more meaningful, but also offers effective advice to the policy makers and administrators in the Muslim societies on how to design the digital governance systems making them effective and ethically acceptable.

Literature Review

The idea of e-governance is now a major theme in the modern literature of public administration as a result of the growing dependence of governments on information and communication technologies (ICTs)

to improve the process of governance. The initial research on e-governance conceptualized the phenomenon as a technical innovation to enhance efficiency and delivery of services in the administration (Ndou, 2004; Heeks, 2006). Such researches highlighted how digital platforms could help in the reduction of red tape within bureaucracy, the very high transaction costs, and the acceleration of access and speed of public service. With time though, there has been the growing acceptance within scholars that e-governance is more than a technological change but a fundamental change in the nature of the public administration and governance as such (Fountain, 2001; Dunleavy et al., 2006).

The concept of e-governance can be linked within the paradigm of digital-era governance, which appeared as a reaction to the restrictions of the New Public Management (NPM), although within the framework of the theory of public administration. According to Dunleavy et al. (2006), the digital-era governance places the state as the central actor in coordination and utilizes the digital technology as a means to unite the services and involve citizens in a more direct manner. This view brings out the normative aspects of digital governance such as shifts in accountability, power of decision-making and relationships between states and their citizens. In the same way, Margetts and Dunleavy (2013) state that digital technologies redefine the relationships of power in the general administration by providing new opportunities of data-driven governance and live-time monitoring.

Although there have been these theoretical developments however much of the e-governance literature continues to be largely instrumental and managerial in nature. A lot of the empirical studies are on the issues of implementation, institutional preparedness, and performance consequences especially in developing nations (Heeks, 2006; Bannister and Connolly, 2014). These studies offer useful information about the limitations of capacity and policy development, although they do not adequately theorize the ethical and normative aspect of digital governance. Due to this, the consideration of ethics is often carried out as a second-rate issue instead of a cornerstone of the digital-era administration.

To address this gap, there has been an increasing literature on the ethical issues relating to e-governance. The researchers have found some of the main ethical considerations, including data privacy, surveillance, algorithmic bias, cybersecurity threats, lack of transparency, as well as digital exclusion (Mittelstadt et al., 2016; Floridi et al., 2018). These fears are especially sharp in the situations of public administration, where digitized systems are playing an increasingly significant role in granting access to rights, welfare benefits, and services of the state. The analysis of surveillance capitalism developed by Zuboff (2019) also highlights the dangers of the development of the concentration of data power and the undermining of personal autonomy in digitally mediated systems of governance.

The analysis of e-governance in the context of the public administration has mostly been based on the Western normative paradigms, such as the liberal democratic theory, human rights discourse and procedural justice models. Individual autonomy, consent, proportionality and accountability are some of the principles that scholars commonly use to assess the legitimacy of digital governance practices (Bannister and Connolly, 2014; Meijer et al., 2016). Although these methods are effective in offering necessary protection against power abuse, they usually presuppose a secular moral standard, which might not be easily acceptable in non-Western or religiously based governmental settings.

Western ethical paradigms supremacy in the study of e-governance holds extensive consequences on the Muslim societies. Though digital governance initiatives have been embraced more in Muslim-majority nations, the ethical assessment of such initiatives is seldom placed in the context of the Islamic normative framework. The literature on the subject of e-governance in Muslim societies is mainly oriented on the theme of development, modernization, and reforming the government structure, and uses global governance indicators like the United Nations E-Government Development Index (UN EGDI) as criteria of evaluation (United Nations, 2022). Although these indicators are valuable in comparison analysis, they fail to consider the ethical and moral aspects of governance as outlined in the Islamic political thinking.

The literature on the topic of public administration in Muslim settings has long been divided into two strands, namely, empirical studies of administrative reform and normative studies of Islamic governance. Bureaucratic performance, institutional capacity, and governance issues in Muslim-dominated countries are frequently the focus of empirical research which relies heavily on mainstream theories of public administration (Jreisat, 2012). In their turn, normative studies address the topic of Islamic political and administrative thought, drawing on classical sources, and discussing such concepts as khilafah, shura, and justice (Al-Mawardi, 1996; Kamali, 2019). Nonetheless, these two strands have not been incorporated much to create a disjointed literature that restricts the applicability of the Islamic ethical principles to modern issues of administration like e-governance.

The literature on the Islamic governance highlights that the administration of people is a moral venture. Islam considers power a form of trust (amanah) and the officials of the government not only answer to the people but also to God (Chapra, 2000). The presence of this dual responsibility is what makes Islamic administrative ethics different to the secular models of public administration, where accountability is usually established based on legal or institutional means only. Classical Islamic thinkers came up with elaborate systems of ethical governance such as hisbah that served in the form of institutionalized control in order to guarantee justice, market fairness and moral behavior in communal life (Cook, 2001).

The idea of maqasid al-shari has become an increasingly popular topic within modern Islamic studies as a broad method of judging the policies and political regimes. Al-Shatibi (2005) defined the maqasid as the safeguarding of religion, life, intellect, lineage, property, and dignity, giving the maqasid a teleological interpretation of the Islamic law and government. The recent researchers have believed that maqasid analysis can be used as a normative instrument to analyze the contemporary policy matters, such as economic development, human rights, and social justice (Kamali, 2008; Auda, 2008). Nevertheless, the utilization of maqasid theory in the context of digital governance and government administration has not been developed.

Few studies have already commenced to investigate the interrespective of Islamic ethics and contemporary issues of governance such as accountability, transparency, and anti-corruption. In the Islamic administrative ethics work, the aforementioned values are justice, benevolence and consultation (Shura); justice, also referred to as adl, benevolence and consultation are among other values that have been

identified as relevant in modern governance reforms (Beekun & Badawi, 2005). Likewise, the research on the topic of Islamic accountability highlights the ethical aspects of being in the public office and the significance of ethical self-regulation and institutional checks (Askari et al., 2015). Although these contributions prove useful, they seldom deal with the particular ethical issues of digital governance technologies.

The lack of Islamic ethical analysis in the e-governance literature is a specific issue of a concern as far as there are very deep implications of digital technologies on the major Islamic values. An example is that data surveillance, biometric identification systems pose serious questions concerning privacy (*hurmat al-khususiyah*), dignity (*karamah*), and the presumption of innocence, which are highly defended under the Islamic ethics. Equally, transparency-deficient algorithmic decision-making systems might be inconsistent with Islamic justice and accountability principles, whereby their takeaway ought to be explainable and reviewable by others.

Further, the matter of digital exclusion carries with it some profound ethical consequences with regard to Islamic governance. Social justice and vulnerability is highly emphasized in the Islamic ethics. E-governance systems which discriminate against the uninformed or illiterate are likely to be counter-productive at reducing inequality and, therefore, defeating the Islamic goal of common good (*maslahah*). Although the mainstream literature on e-governance recognizes the digital divide as a policy issue, it seldom considers that issue in ethical context, especially through the prism of religion or morality.

The recent interdisciplinary work has demanded the increased pluralistic approaches to the concept of public administration and government, which are more culturally and ethically pluralistic. According to scholars, the problem of global governance, such as digital transformation, cannot be sufficiently resolved with the help of a single normative framework (Jreisat, 2012; Kim and McDonald, 2020). In this new discourse, the Islamic ethics has a rich but underexploited point of view that can advance global discourse on digital governance with its focus on moral responsibility, social justice, and human dignity.

Systematic Islamic ethical evaluation of e-governance is however limited despite this increasing awareness. The majority of the work did discuss Islamic governance as a historical event or discusses the contemporary governance problems without referring to the Islamic normative theory extensively. Consequently, the literature gap in the area of e-governance, ethics of public administration and Islamic studies is evident. To fill this gap, an interdisciplinary strategy should be used, incorporating the information of the public administration theory, the study of digital governance, and the Islamic ethical philosophy.

This work has contributed to the current body of knowledge by placing e-governance in an Islamic ethical context based on the main principles of governance and *maqasid al-shari'ah*. Through it, it seems to be answering the calls of a more normatively-based and context-sensitive approach to the administration of the populace in Muslim societies. The above literature review shows that there is a lot of research on e-governance and Islamic governance as independent variables but little has been done on integrating the two. This article is aimed at adding to this new direction by providing a consistent ethical evaluation of

e-governance that is both conceptually sound and pragmatic in the case of Muslim communities.

Research Methodology

This paper uses a normative-analytical research approach that is qualitative in nature, in an effort to analyze e-governance and public administration in Muslim societies, using the Islamic ethical lens. Since the research problem is conceptual and ethically oriented, the study will not attempt to provide references to test hypothesis or determine a causal relationship but, on the contrary, aims to create a systematic ethical evaluation based on tenets of Islamic governance. The qualitative approach is especially suitable when it comes to investigating values, norms and ethical assumptions underlying the practice of governance and religious traditions, which can be analyzed through the prism of an interpretive and context-sensitive approach.

The study design is rather theoretical and descriptive, which combines the understanding of the public administration theory, the studies of digital governance, and the Islamic ethical philosophy. The paper solely uses secondary sources of data, which are classical Islamic materials, such as Quran, approved collections of Hadiths, and foundational materials on Islamic governance and administration by authors such as Al-Mawardi, Al-Ghazali, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Al-Shatibi. These are the sources of normative ethics of Islamic principles of governance, like justice (adl), trust (amanah), consultation (shura), accountability (muhasabah) and common good (maslahah). Moreover, the current academic research on e-governance and ethics in public administration is discussed to determine the existing ethical issues related to digital governance, such as transparency, accountability, privacy of data, digital surveillance, algorithmic decisions, and social inclusion.

Institutional reports and policy documents on the e-governance projects in the Muslim-majority countries are also examined to contextualize the ethical debate in the context of the current administrative practices. There are national strategies on digital governance, reports issued by international agencies like the United Nations and the United Nations Development Programme among others in these documents. Although the research does not target any particular nation, the fact that it includes policy documents enables one to conceptualize and implement e-governance in the Muslim societies in a broader manner.

Thematic qualitative analysis is used to analyze the data. Relevant texts are properly reviewed and coded based on the key ethical themes that are based on both Islamic governance principles and the literature on ethics in the public administration. The analysis continues by initially determining some of the key Islamic ethical ideas applicable in the governing context as well as determining ethical issues that are usually related to e-governance. A comparative normative analysis is then made to determine the degree to which e-governance practices in the contemporary world are in line with or non-conformant to Islamic ethics. The process allows identifying the ethical compatibilities, tensions, and gaps between the digital governance practices and the Islamic moral values.

The study employs the analytical framework of the maqasid al-shari, which is an analytical normative framework of reviewing e-governance practices in terms of their contribution to justice, human dignity,

the welfare of the people, and accountability. These goals are converted into appraisal standards that can apply to digital governance, which enables the Islamic ethical theory to be applied in a modern government setting. Simultaneously, all of the well-known values of public administration like transparency, participation, equity, and efficiency are evaluated with the Islamic ethical concepts rather than being viewed as value-neutral standards.

The focus of the research is narrowed down to ethical and normative analysis. It does not evaluate the technical performance, economic efficiency or political performance of certain e-governance systems and does not require any empirical field work like survey or interviewing. This restriction guarantees analytical substantiation and theoretical consistency as well as a base on which future empirical study can be conducted. The theoretical triangulation of the methodological rigor exists using various bodies of literature to approve the ethical interpretations and minimize bias. The research is also characterized by the analytical transparency as it explicitly correlates the evaluative judgments with the published Islamic principles and accepted values in the field of the administration.

Being document-based research, the study does not offer any human subjects as the research activity does not present any ethical issues regarding informed consent or protection of personal data. However, ethical responsibility is maintained by proper referencing of the sources, consideration of religious books, and academic neutrality. Altogether, the given approach allows conducting an organized context-based Islamic ethical evaluation of e-governance as part of a government, which will be added to the body of interdisciplinary research and will provide normative insights with regards to ethical, digitally responsible governance in Muslim countries.

Findings and Discussion

The analysis has shown that e-governance in Muslim societies is an intricate ethical environment with some strong points of convergence with the Islamic principles of governance and has also highlighted some areas of clash with the Muslim ethical standards. Among the best aspects of investigation results is that, the essential goals of the e-governance, which include building of transparency, elevation of administrative effectiveness, elimination of corruption and enabling the citizens to obtain citizenship services, are widely coherent with Islamic ethical beliefs. Islamic leadership underlines justice (adl), accountability (muhasabah), and communal good (maslahah), all of which are one of the major goals of modern digital administration reorganizations. Online systems that diminish discretionary authority, automate service delivery processes, and provide a greater visibility of administrative processes can thus be regarded as being supportive of Islamic moral goals, especially in a situation where bureaucratic secrecy and corruption have traditionally destroyed popular trust.

Simultaneously, the results show that efficiency or technological advancement cannot be considered enough to determine the ethical legitimacy of e-governance in the Muslim societies. Among the ethical issues that have been identified as one of the greatest is accountability. Although e-governance systems are usually associated with more transparency, the enhanced use of automated decision-making and sophisticated digital systems might blur the lines of accountability in the area of public administration.

According to the Islamic moral ethics, accountability is not institutional but moral; it is based on the principle of amanah where the officials of the masses are given powers and expected to exercise them justly. The spread of accountability through the digital systems poses a threat of undermining this moral accountability except a distinct system of accountability and responsibilities is put in place.

The other significant finding is the problem of data privacy and surveillance, which can be identified as a significant ethical problem in e-governance. Digital identity systems, biometric databases, and surveillance technologies are some of the e-governance tools many Muslim societies have put in place. Although these tools have the potential to develop a stronger administrative control and service provision, there are major ethical issues that are brought up in terms of privacy, dignity (karamah), and power abuse. The principles of Islamic ethics greatly safeguard the personal privacy and outlaw unnecessary interference in personal lives. The examination indicates that e-governance practices that follow the security/efficiency principle at the cost of privacy may jeopardise these principles, hence jeopardising the ethical aspects of Islamic governance.

Social justice and digital inclusion are also noted as the key ethical concerns in the findings. Islamic governance emphasizes a lot on equity, as well as protection of vulnerable groups. It is possible that e-governance systems, where everyone is expected to have access to digital infrastructure and digital literacy, will unwillingly disenfranchise the rural population, the aging population, the poor, and other marginalized populations. Although the digital divide is a better understood phenomenon as being an issue in the developmental literature on public administration and administration, the Islamic ethical evaluation envisions the digital divide as a question of justice and moral accountability. In this sense, the exclusion of some groups to digital public services is not only a policy failure but it is also an ethical failure that is against the goal of maslahah.

Another ethical conflict area is participation and consultation. E-governance is usually marketed as a method of increasing citizen engagement in terms of online consultations, feedback programs, and digital platforms. Nevertheless, the results indicate that in Muslim societies, even most e-governance projects are mostly top-down, and there is not much active involvement of citizens in decision-making. Shura is considered one of the guiding principles of Islamic governance, which involves proper and real consultation in all matters of the people. This ethical ideal is not achieved when e-governance is implemented as a means of service delivery, but not as a form of participation in governance.

The analysis also indicates that the current e-governance systems in the Muslim societies are largely influenced by the global governance systems and international standards without much consideration of Islamic ethical aspects. This dependence on external derived models could be one of the factors that leads to the lack of a connection between digital governance systems and the moral expectations of people in Muslim societies. Whereas the standards of international standards urge on technical performance and institutional capacity, Islamic ethics presuppose moral intent, justice, and accountability. Lack of clear Islamic ethics in e-governance design is therefore a major gap in normativity.

Under the maqasid al-shari'ah point of view the results show that e-governance can support various Islamic

law objectives, especially the protection of property, the common good and the social order. This potential, however, depends on ethical measures that would guarantee the safety of the human dignity, intellect, and privacy. Such technologies as mass data gathering, predictive policing, or obfuscated algorithmic decisions can serve these purposes in the wrong way unless they are highly controlled. This Islamic moral evaluation would then indicate that technology is ethically neutral; the moral legitimacy of technology is determined by the governance system in which it is applied.

A valuable theoretical implication of the discussion to the scholarship on the subject of public administration is also identified. The results show that Islamic principles of ethics provide a unified and systematic approach to the assessment of digital governance, which undermines the belief that the ethics of governance should be founded solely on secular or Western concepts and normative traditions. Having a focus on moral responsibility, social justice and human dignity, the Islamic ethics offers a complementary viewpoint that extends the plurality of debate on e-governance and reform of the public sector around the world.

On the whole, the results indicate that even though e-governance is consistent with the principles of Islamic governance at the level of the stated goals, there are still serious ethical issues at the levels of implementation and institutional design. To handle these issues, it is necessary to shift readings of digital governance beyond the realm of technocracy to the ethically informed policy and design of systems, as well as administrative procedures, by incorporating Islamic values into the policy-making process. The said approach can not only increase the legitimacy of e-governance in Muslim societies but can also help to enrich pluralistic and more ethically sound sense of public administration in the digital era.

Conclusion

This paper aimed at investigating e-governance and administration among Muslims with reference to an Islamic ethical lens based on an important gap in the literature covering both the subject of public administration and Islamic governance. This discussion shows that e-governance is not an administrative or technical reformation but a normative change that has extensive ethical effects. Although the digital governance projects in Muslim communities have been commonly supported by the concepts of efficiency, transparency and modernization, the ethics of the projects cannot be sufficiently evaluated without allusions of moral principles of the Islamic governance.

According to the results, the majority of the fundamental goals of e-governance, including, but not limited to, better service delivery, less corruption, and better administrative transparency, are aligned with Islamic ethics, especially, justice (adl), accountability (muhasabah), and public welfare (maslahah). Nevertheless, the research also demonstrates the existence of some serious ethical issues concerning the adoption of digital governance systems, particularly, the issue of privacy, surveillance, digital exclusion, and the erosion of moral responsibility in automated administration. Such issues are the reasons why introducing e-governance models that focus on technological efficiency without caring about ethical and religious concerns which are at the core of Muslim societies is a threat.

Using *maqasid al-shari'ah* as a normative evaluative tool, the paper shows that the Islamic ethics can provide a systematic method of evaluating digital governance. This practice makes human dignity, moral responsibility, and social justice more prominent, thus adding some depth to modern discussions of the administrative state that is usually dominated by the materialistic and secular views. Finally, the research concludes that ethically-based e-governance in Muslim societies entails the intentional incorporation of Islamic ethical values into the policy formulation, institutional design and governance operations. This kind of integration can be an added advantage to public confidence, governance legitimacy, and more humane and just digital systems of governance.

Limitations of the Study

Although this study has made theoretical and normative contributions, it has a number of limitations that are worthy of consideration. First, the study assumes a qualitative and conceptual approach using secondary sources and does not use any empirical data to include in the research, such as interviews, surveys, or case studies. Consequently, the results are a manifestation of normative analysis as opposed to the evaluation of certain e-governance system or citizen experiences. Although this method is suitable on the ethical assessment approach, it restricts the generalization of findings to various institutional and cultural backgrounds.

Second, the research presents Muslim societies in general and not the particular country or administration. This provides some general ethical observations, but might fail to recognise the significant contextual differences of legal systems, political structures, and technology advancement of countries dominated by Muslims. Third, the application of Islamic moral codes is based on general academic views, which might not reflect the whole range of Islamic jurisprudential and theological opinions. Lastly, ethical issues that relate to e-governance will transform as time goes by because digital technologies are rapidly changing and this could restrict the general applicability of certain conclusions.

Recommendations on Future Research.

Based on the limitations and conclusions of this research, a number of directions in future research are suggested. To begin with, empirical research is required to determine the extent to which e-governance projects in particular Muslim dominant nations are consistent with or inconsistent with Islamic ethics in practice. Qualitative case studies, interviews with policymakers, and citizen surveys might be a great source of information on lived experiences of digital governance and ethical perceptions.

Second, future studies may transform Islamic ethical concepts including *maqasid al-shari'ah*, *amanah* and *shura* into quantifiable indicators of assessing e-governance performance. This would be useful in coming up with Islamic ethics-based governance assessment tools that are complementary to the global indices. Third, by analyzing differences in the outcomes of digital governance in Muslim and non-Muslim societies, comparative research would contribute to the cross-cultural literature of cross-cultural public administration.

Another area that requires further study on the Islamic ethical view is new technologies like artificial intelligence, big data analytics, and algorithmic governance. These technologies introduce new issues of autonomy, accountability and justice which involve more profound normative activity. Lastly, interdisciplinary teamwork of the scholars of the field of public administration, Islamic jurists, information systems expert, and policymakers would aid in applying the Islamic ethical theory into viable governance systems that can inform ethically responsible digital transformation.

References

1. Al-Ghazali, A. H. (1997). *Ihya' Ulum al-Din (Revival of the Religious Sciences)*. Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah.
2. Al-Mawardi, A. H. (1996). *Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah: The Ordinances of Government* (W. Wahba, Trans.). Garnet Publishing.
3. Al-Shatibi, A. I. (2005). *Al-Muwafaqat fi Usul al-Shariah*. Dar Ibn Affan.
4. Askari, H., Iqbal, Z., & Mirakhor, A. (2015). *Ethical Foundations of Islamic Economics*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137405221>
5. Auda, J. (2008). *Maqasid al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach*. International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT).
6. Bannister, F., & Connolly, R. (2014). ICT, public values and transformative government: A framework and programme for research. *Government Information Quarterly*, 31(1), 119–128. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2013.06.002>
7. Beekun, R. I., & Badawi, J. A. (2005). *Leadership: An Islamic Perspective*. Amana Publications.
8. Chapra, M. U. (2000). *Islam and the Economic Challenge*. Islamic Foundation.
9. Cook, M. (2001). *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511497563>
10. Dunleavy, P., Margetts, H., Bastow, S., & Tinkler, J. (2006). New public management is dead—Long live digital-era governance. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 16(3), 467–494. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mui057>
11. Floridi, L., Cowls, J., Beltrametti, M., Chatila, R., Chazerand, P., Dignum, V., ... Vayena, E. (2018). AI4People—An ethical framework for a good AI society. *Minds and Machines*, 28(4), 689–707. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11023-018-9482-5>
12. Fountain, J. E. (2001). *Building the Virtual State: Information Technology and Institutional Change*. Brookings Institution Press.
13. Frederickson, H. G. (1997). *The Spirit of Public Administration*. Jossey-Bass.
14. Heeks, R. (2006). *Implementing and Managing e-Government: An International Text*. Sage Publications.
15. Ibn Taymiyyah, A. (1983). *Al-Hisbah fi al-Islam (Public Duties in Islam)*. Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah.
16. Jreisat, J. E. (2012). *Governance and Developing Countries*. Routledge.
17. Kamali, M. H. (2008). *Maqasid al-Shariah Made Simple*. International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT).
18. Kamali, M. H. (2019). *Shari'ah Law: An Introduction*. Oneworld Publications.
19. Kim, P. S., & McDonald, B. D. (2020). Public administration theory and practice in times of crisis. *Public Administration Review*, 80(3), 447–450. <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13225>
20. Margetts, H., & Dunleavy, P. (2013). The second wave of digital-era governance. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A*, 371(187), 20120382.

- <https://doi.org/10.1098/rsta.2012.0382>
21. Margetts, H., & Dorobantu, C. (2019). Rethink government with AI. *Nature*, 568, 163–165. <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-019-01099-5>
 22. Meijer, A., Curtin, D., & Hillebrandt, M. (2016). Open government: Connecting vision and voice. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 82(1), 10–29. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020852314564784>
 23. Mittelstadt, B. D., Allo, P., Taddeo, M., Wachter, S., & Floridi, L. (2016). The ethics of algorithms: Mapping the debate. *Big Data & Society*, 3(2), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053951716679679>
 24. Ndou, V. (2004). E-government for developing countries: Opportunities and challenges. *The Electronic Journal on Information Systems in Developing Countries*, 18(1), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1681-4835.2004.tb00117.x>
 25. United Nations. (2022). United Nations E-Government Survey 2022: The Future of Digital Government. UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs.
 26. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2021). Digital Governance in the Arab States. UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States.
 27. Zuboff, S. (2019). *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. PublicAffairs.