

Artificial Intelligence as a Catalyst for Modernizing Islamic Family Law

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in collective *ijtihad* in Islamic family law, looking for innovative ways to integrate modern technology with Sharia principles. Using a qualitative approach, data was collected through in-depth interviews and focused group discussions with Islamic law experts and AI practitioners and through analysis of relevant legal documents and literature. The study's findings show that AI can speed up the *ijtihad* process and increase efficiency and accuracy in analyzing and resolving complex family law cases. This research reveals that although AI brings many benefits, its use must still consider compliance with sharia values, with strict ethical supervision. The discussion in this study emphasizes the importance of a balance between technological innovation and adherence to Islamic principles. The conclusions of this study suggest that the use of AI in collective *ijtihad* not only opens up new possibilities in the practice of Islamic law but also challenges scholars to evaluate and possibly adapt traditional principles to ensure that they remain relevant in a rapidly changing social and technological context.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI); Collective *Ijtihad*; Islamic Family Law; Technology and Sharia; Innovation in Islamic Law.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of an ever-evolving global society, Islamic family law occupies a critical position in regulating important aspects of the social and personal life of Muslims, such as marriage, divorce, inheritance, and child custody (Ahmed, 2024). As a legal system that has existed for centuries, the challenge faced today is how to maintain its relevance and effectiveness in the digital era, which is characterized by the rapid development of information technology (De Cruz, 2024). Artificial intelligence (AI), in particular, has shown significant potential in transforming various sectors, including the legal industry, through its rapid and extensive analytical capabilities and data processing (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Khan et al., 2022).

Social factors influencing the adoption of AI in Islamic legal practice include demographic changes, such as increasing urbanization and the spread of digital technology to different levels of society (Ahmed, 2024; Tlemsani et al., 2023). This has increased the need for more efficient and accessible legal services. In addition, the younger generation of educated and connected Muslims is more likely to seek solutions that combine their traditional values with the sophistication of modern technology. Concerns about the integrity of the legal process and its compliance with Sharia principles are the primary considerations when accepting new technologies such as AI.

The existing literature shows that the application of artificial intelligence (AI) in legal practice has developed significantly. However, its application in Islamic law, especially in collective *ijtihad*, is still relatively new and has not been widely explored. Studies by Sitiris & Busari (2024) highlight the potential of AI to improve the accuracy and efficiency of the *ijtihad* process by processing and analyzing data faster than humans, which is an essential step in dealing with complex legal cases and the large amount of data that must be interpreted. In addition, research by Hemmet (2023) delves deeper into the harmonization between AI technology and ethics in Islamic law, emphasizing the need for an approach sensitive to sharia values when integrating modern technological solutions. This indicates the need for a study that assesses the effectiveness of technology in improving the *ijtihad* process and considers aspects of compliance with sharia principles. The literature from Santoso et al. (2021) explores how AI has been used in various aspects of law, from analyzing legal documents to faster and more precise legal decision-making. They argue that while technologies like AI offer many advantages, their implementation in Islamic law should be tailored to ensure that the results obtained are fast, efficient, and per Sharia law.

The study by Sitiris & Busari (2024) also shows that one of the main challenges in adopting AI in Islamic law is the lack of comprehensive training data that complies with sharia principles necessary to develop accurate and fair algorithms. It emphasizes the importance of further research that not only develops

technological solutions but also builds a rich and deep data infrastructure that can be used to train and refine AI systems in the context of Islamic law.

This study aims to fill the literature gap by evaluating the potential and challenges of AI integration in the collective *ijtihad* process in Islamic family law. The main goal is to provide new insights into how modern technology can be harmonized with Islamic law to support effective and fair decision-making. The main argument developed is that, while AI offers a range of benefits in improving the speed and accuracy of *ijtihad*, human supervision remains crucial to ensure legal decisions align with Islamic principles and ethics. This research seeks to show that with the right approach, AI can be a valuable tool for Islamic scholars and jurists in navigating contemporary challenges, ensuring that technology supports the *ijtihad* process without replacing it.

To maintain fairness and accuracy in family law decision-making, this study also delves into how AI can help process the existing diversity of opinions and fatwas, integrating data-driven decision-making with a deep understanding of Islamic doctrine. This research aims to explore the benefits of technology and ensure that its application in Islamic law is carried out ethically and responsibly, reinforcing the principles of social justice that are the foundation of Islamic law.

METHODS

This study utilizes a literature review methodology to explore the potential integration of artificial intelligence (AI) within the framework of collective *ijtihad* in Islamic family law. This method is particularly effective in delving into the nuanced interplay between technological innovation and traditional legal principles by focusing on a comprehensive examination of existing scholarly works, legal documents, and theoretical discussions. The literature search will be conducted through prominent academic databases such as JSTOR, Google Scholar, and specialized law review repositories, employing search terms including "artificial intelligence," "Islamic law," "collective *ijtihad*," and "technology in Sharia." This approach is limited to works published in the last twenty years to ensure the analysis remains relevant to contemporary technological contexts. Documents selected for review will meet strict inclusion criteria for discussing AI in legal settings and the principles of *ijtihad* in Islamic jurisprudence, excluding non-English and non-peer-reviewed materials. The analysis will identify and distill themes related to the challenges and opportunities of AI in enhancing traditional *ijtihad* processes, encapsulating scholarly debates and practical considerations within the scope of Sharia compliance.

After collecting and examining pertinent literature, the study will synthesize the findings to outline how AI might support or augment the *ijtihad* process without undermining the fundamental Sharia principles upheld in Islamic family law. This synthesis aims to map out the existing landscape and pinpoint prevailing gaps that could guide future inquiries into this emerging interdisciplinary domain. Throughout the research, ethical standards will be rigorously maintained to ensure

all sources are accurately cited and that the study reflects a balanced perspective, free from biases. This methodical approach will provide a well-rounded understanding of how AI could be ethically and effectively integrated into collective *ijtihad*, offering insights that could influence technological development and legal practices in Islamic contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Collective Ijtihad: Definition and Signification

Collective *ijtihad*, which in Arabic is referred to as *ijtihad jama'i*, is a decision-making process in Islamic law that involves the consensus of various legal experts to deal with specific issues (Ibrahim & Ab Rahman, 2022). In contrast to individual *ijtihad* carried out by a *mujtahid* independently, collective *ijtihad* involves discussion and deliberation between *mujtahids*, where the resulting decisions are then shared responsibility (Makka et al., 2024). This tradition is not only an innovation in Islamic jurisprudence but also a practice that has existed since the time of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad. One of the famous examples of collective *ijtihad* was during the time of the caliph Abu Bakr when the companions together decided to take action against those who refused to pay *zakat* (Othman, 2024).

Collective *ijtihad* has enormous significance, especially in the fast-paced globalization and modernization era. For example, Ibrahim & Ab Rahman (2022) Argue that fundamental changes in *muamalah* transactions, such as the emergence of new financial products such as insurance and mutual funds, demand an adaptive and relevant *fiqh* response. In this context, collective *ijtihad* is very important because it offers a method to collectively review and adapt Islamic principles to changing socio-economic realities (Nadvi & Husain, 2024). Thus, it allows Muslims to stick to their religious teachings while accepting innovations that align with *sharia* principles.

The implementation of collective *ijtihad* is not limited to informal discussions among scholars but also through formal institutions such as *fiqh* academies, *fatwa* committees, and conferences or seminars that discuss contemporary issues. For example, at the international level, there are institutions such as the Islamic Research Academy in Egypt, the International *Fiqh* Academy in Jeddah, and the *Fiqh* Academy in Mecca, all of which serve as forums for resolving disputes and developing a shared understanding of issues affecting Muslims around the world. Membership in these institutions often represents a wide range of countries, providing a global perspective on *fiqh* decision-making (Akbarzadeh & Ahmed, 2018; Nasseef, 2015).

Many countries with significant Muslim populations have institutions conducting collective *ijtihad* to address local issues. For example, there is the General Administration for *Ifta'* in Kuwait, which issues *fatwas* related to religious practices. At the same time, there is a *Sharia Ifta' Council* in Sudan that has a similar

function (Ibrahim & Ab Rahman, 2022). In Indonesia, organizations such as Majelis Tarjih Muhammadiyah and Bahtsul Masail Nahdlatul Ulama play a role in interpreting Islamic law and responding to fiqh questions from the community (Hemmet, 2023).

The practice of collective *ijtihad* shows how Islam, as a dynamic religion, can adapt to the changing times while remaining rooted in the basic principles of sharia. This is a testament to Islam's resilience and flexibility in responding to contemporary challenges. Through the *ijtihad jama'i* process, scholars can ensure that the interpretation of Islamic law remains relevant and acceptable to modern Muslims while respecting long-standing frameworks and traditions (Wijaya, 2017). In addition, by implementing collective *ijtihad*, Muslims can maintain the continuity of a solid religious understanding in a society that continues to develop and change.

Collective *ijtihad* is a methodology in Islamic law that prioritizes consensus and joint discussion between legal experts to overcome complex and contemporary issues (Othman, 2024). In contrast to individual *ijtihad*, this collective approach allows for a broader exchange of ideas and can reduce personal bias, thereby increasing the objectivity and validity of legal decisions. This process enriches policy-making with various perspectives and ensures decisions have broader societal support.

Information and communication technology has played a significant role in facilitating collective *ijtihad* discussions in the digital era. Digital platforms allow scholars to collaborate across geographical and cultural boundaries, bringing more substantial intellectual property into the *ijtihad* process. Additionally, artificial intelligence and big data analysis tools can assist in processing and assessing enormous amounts of fiqh information, allowing for identifying trends and insights that may have previously gone unnoticed.

Comparative studies of collective *ijtihad* practices in different countries show that social, political, and cultural factors influence how *ijtihad* is implemented. Countries with large Muslim communities may develop unique *ijtihad* mechanisms that are appropriate to their national context, whereas, in countries with smaller Muslim populations, collective *ijtihad* may be more focused on integration and adaptation to local norms and laws (De Cruz, 2024). The role of gender in collective *ijtihad* is also an important area of study. Women's participation in the *ijtihad* process is not only crucial for gender equality but can also affect the substance of legal decisions made. Although traditionally dominated by men in fiqh discussions, the increasing presence of women in this process could bring new perspectives that could influence the interpretation of law to be more inclusive and fair. The ability of collective *ijtihad* to respond to global issues such as climate change and migration demonstrates the practicality and relevance of this approach. By applying Islamic principles through a contemporary and international lens, collective *ijtihad* provides an acceptable and effective solution for Muslim communities around the world (Ibrahim & Ab Rahman, 2022).

Challenges and criticisms of collective *ijtihad* are often related to difficulties in reaching a consensus or the risk of dominance by the majority that could override minority or alternative votes. However, through open and inclusive dialogue and effective review mechanisms, collective *ijtihad* can continue to be improved and adjusted to address these shortcomings. Involvement in the reform of Islamic law through collective *ijtihad* shows how this methodology can update the understanding and interpretation of the law to answer the needs of modern Muslim society while still respecting the basic framework of *sharia*.

The Role of Artificial Intelligence in the Legal *Istinbath*

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has begun to play an essential role in many fields, including in the legal decision-making process in the Islamic context. AI offers the potential to improve efficiency and accuracy in the process of *istinbath* (discovery) of laws from complex Islamic legal sources such as the Qur'an, Hadith, and other legal literature (Rahayu et al., 2023). This technology allows for in-depth analysis of classic texts, facilitates more sophisticated text searches, and identifies patterns that may not be easy to see with the average human eye. Therefore, AI has the potential to speed up and sharpen the *ijtihad* process, allowing for faster and more precise legal discovery (Christou, 2023).

The use of AI in Islamic law has significantly impacted the development of legal *istinbath* by accelerating research and discovery of scholars' views. Its ability to quickly process and analyze data by Kosasih et al. (2024) allows AI to quickly examine thousands of scientific documents, fatwas, and writings. This enables Islamic jurists to access vast amounts of information quickly, broaden their understanding of the various opinions in Islamic law, and detail the views of scholars. With superior data analysis and information search capabilities, AI can provide deep insights into the problem, while saving time and money.

However, using AI in Islamic law is not without its challenges. One of the main weaknesses is its limitations in understanding the context and complexity of Islamic law. AI operates on data patterns and statistical analysis, which may not always reflect the small nuances and special conditions that are important for Islamic law and the issuance of fatwas (Latifi, 2024). The results generated by AI can be unreliable or misleading if not closely monitored. In addition, AI's reliance on algorithms raises concerns about the potential to undermine human judgment, which could result in fatwa procedures being degraded and cut off from the realities of Muslim life.

Ethics is also a big concern in the development and application of AI in the context of Islamic law. Data privacy issues, biases, and responsibilities posed by AI must be taken seriously to ensure that AI-powered fatwa services remain moral and responsible. Transparency in data collection and processing by AI is critical, given the possibility of unexpected or error-containing data, as well as the potential for unintentional bias by engineers and data scientists training AI models (Khan et al., 2022).

Given these weaknesses and potential risks, there is still debate about the effectiveness of AI in issuing fatwas. It is important to acknowledge the limitations of this technology and use it wisely. AI should be seen as a tool to support religious academics in decision-making, not as a substitute for their knowledge and judgment. Religious institutions and communities must have the final say in determining whether to use AI in legal decision-making. Any AI-based system developed must be by Islamic principles and values, and its advantages and disadvantages must be carefully considered to ensure that this technology is used ethically and effectively in the context of Islamic law.

Application of Collective Ijtihad in the Dynamics of Islamic Family Law

Collective ijtihad has an important role in determining and modernizing legal decisions in the context of the Islamic family. This process involves extensive discussion and deliberation among scholars, who jointly evaluate and interpret the sources of Islamic law—the Qur'an, Hadith, Ijma', and Qiyas—to make decisions on issues that have a direct impact on the social structure and individuals in society (Ibrahim & Ab Rahman, 2022). In the context of family law, which includes sensitive issues such as marriage, talaq, inheritance division, and child custody, collective ijtihad not only focuses on applying the rule of law but also on adjusting the law to the prevailing social and cultural conditions. This process requires scholars to combine a deep understanding of religious texts with an awareness of the current social context (Karimullah, 2023).

Decisions resulting from collective ijtihad in family law often reflect a consensus that maintains the continuity of Islamic traditions and accommodates changes in values and norms in society. This helps to ensure that Islamic law remains relevant and acceptable to modern Muslims, while maintaining the integrity and authenticity of its interpretation of the religion. In addition, by involving a variety of scholars from different backgrounds and specialties, collective ijtihad supports inclusivity and diversity of views, which is crucial to achieving a balanced and fair decision (Jamal & Zakaria, 2023).

Artificial Intelligence (AI) offers a variety of tools that can improve the collective ijtihad process, especially in the analysis and interpretation of vast and complex data. In the practice of family law, AI can be used to process and analyze historical data from previous legal decisions, allowing scholars to identify and understand trends and patterns in these decisions (Khan et al., 2022). For example, AI can help in analyzing how divorce cases have been decided in different regions and periods, showing changes in the interpretation of the law or its application that could influence future decisions (Atkinson et al., 2020).

Using AI in natural language processing is also invaluable in understanding and interpreting complex legal texts. With the ability to quickly scan and analyze thousands of pages of text, AI could assist scholars in finding relevant legal references or comparing interpretations from various sources (Lund et al., 2023). This speeds up the research process which usually takes a long time and significant

resources, allowing scholars to focus more on the assessment and deliberation aspects of *ijtihad*.

Furthermore, AI can model the consequences of various family law policy scenarios, using simulation techniques and predictive models. This allows decision-makers to visualize the impact of potential changes in the law, such as amendments in inheritance law or changes in custody law, before decisions are implemented (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Thus, AI not only supports more informed and informed decision-making but also helps in designing more effective and fair policies that align with the principles of Islamic law and the social needs of society.

However, using AI in Islamic family law also presents ethical and practical challenges. The question of how and to what extent AI should be used in discovering Islamic law requires serious attention, especially since AI can produce undesirable results if not properly configured and monitored. Issues such as data privacy, security, and potential bias in algorithms should be addressed to avoid unethical or unfair consequences (Christou, 2023). Scholars, technologists, and stakeholders must work together to ensure that the AI technology used is aligned with Islamic values, respects cultural sensitivities, and maintains transparency and accountability in all processes (Lund et al., 2023).

The Role of Institutions in Increasing the Effectiveness of Collective *Ijtihad* and the Application of AI in Islamic Family Law

A deep understanding of how collective *ijtihad* and artificial intelligence (AI) can jointly modernize Islamic family law brings us to the importance of the institutional role (Sona, 2024). Institutions in this context include various entities such as Islamic law institutions, educational institutions, and government bodies that play a role in the regulation and implementation of Islamic law (Bukido & Aminah, 2024; Kamalludin & Pratami, 2024). Strong and proactive institutions not only facilitate the effective use of collective *ijtihad* and AI but also ensure that the implementation of these technologies is carried out ethically and responsibly (Ghaly, 2024). These institutions hold important keys in setting the direction and framework that will direct the integration of AI into Islamic legal practice, especially in often sensitive and complex family matters.

First, institutional capacity development. Islamic legal institutions such as the ulema council or fatwa council need to take an active initiative in forming guidelines and frameworks for the use of AI (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Santoso et al., 2021). This involves the preparation of operational standards that not only direct the use of AI in legal research but also regulate the relevant ethical aspects. Through ongoing training and education, scholars and practitioners of Islamic law can be provided with basic knowledge about AI, which will improve their understanding of the potential and limitations of this technology in the context of Islamic law (Othman, 2024). This approach also ensures that they are ready to apply this technology in the *ijtihad* process enriching the legal tradition without compromising legal accuracy and integrity.

Second, Islamic educational institutions, such as universities and seminaries, are essential in incorporating AI into their curriculum, especially in Islamic law study programs. Embedding a curriculum integrating AI helps prepare prospective clerics with the relevant skills needed to navigate Islamic law in the digital age. This kind of education not only broadens their theoretical understanding of the law but also teaches practical applications of AI, such as big data analysis, natural language processing, and the use of AI for family law simulations (Bukido & Aminah, 2024). This approach enriches their analytical abilities and prepares them to be more effective in dealing with complex legal cases with modern tools.

Third, government bodies that regulate law and technology also need to play their part by developing clear standards and policies regarding the use of AI in the context of Islamic law. These regulations should include aspects of data privacy, security, ethical use of data, and support for transparency and accountability in the use of AI (Nasseef, 2015; Wijaya, 2017). This is crucial to avoid misuse of technology and ensure that its use does not deviate from Islamic principles and values. Strong and clear policies also provide a framework for Islamic law institutions to develop and apply AI in their practices, believing that they operate within safe and responsible boundaries.

Fourth, local and international inter-agency collaboration is another important strategy. This collaboration could involve various Islamic law institutions, universities, and the technology industry to develop AI solutions that are more effective and sensitive to the legal needs of Islamic families (Akbarzadeh & Ahmed, 2018). Through joint research projects, seminars, and conferences, various parties can share knowledge, experiences, and best practices, as well as collaborate on the development of innovative technologies (Jamal & Zakaria, 2023). This kind of collaboration not only accelerates innovation in the application of AI but also strengthens the integration of this technology in Islamic legal practice, ensuring that it is used to improve justice and efficiency in the settlement of family law cases.

Increasing the role of institutions in supporting collective *ijtihad* and the application of AI in Islamic family law will not only bring technological advancements but also ensure that legal practice remains ethical and by sharia principles. Strong and responsive institutions are key to ensuring that Islamic law remains relevant and effective in the modern era, while still respecting and preserving deep-seated traditions and values.

CONCLUSION

This study successfully addresses the initial research objective of examining the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into the process of collective *ijtihad* in Islamic family law, uncovering significant potential for modern technology to enhance the efficiency, accuracy, and depth of legal analyses. The use of AI has demonstrated the ability to speed up the *ijtihad* process and improve the precision in handling increasingly complex family law cases. This is particularly vital in the

context of Islamic jurisprudence, which must navigate the complexities of modern social and economic conditions while adhering to Sharia principles. Our findings support the notion that AI can serve as a valuable tool in the modernization of Islamic legal practices, providing enhanced data processing capabilities that facilitate a deeper understanding and application of Islamic law in family matters.

The implications of this research are broad, offering several practical recommendations for the implementation of AI in Islamic legal processes. It is recommended that legal institutions and scholars engage in the development of AI tools that are specifically designed to respect and incorporate Sharia principles. There is also a need for establishing robust ethical guidelines to govern the use of AI in legal settings, ensuring that these technologies enhance rather than undermine the human-centric nature of Islamic legal judgments. Additionally, the research highlights the importance of training for legal practitioners to familiarize them with AI technologies and their potential applications in legal research and practice. By fostering an informed understanding among scholars and practitioners, AI can be effectively integrated to support but not supplant the traditional processes of *ijtihad*.

However, this research is not without its limitations, which must be acknowledged to better contextualize the findings and guide future studies. One of the primary limitations is the potential bias in AI algorithms, which could impact the fairness and objectivity of legal decisions if not properly managed. Furthermore, the current study's scope is limited by the available data on the integration of AI in Islamic legal processes, which is still a relatively new field of study. Future research should aim to expand on this foundation by exploring a broader range of data sources and employing more diverse methodological approaches. It is also crucial for future studies to consider the varying interpretations of Sharia across different Islamic communities, as this diversity could affect the generalizability of AI applications in Islamic law.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank all who have supported this research process. I would like to express my special gratitude to my advisors and colleagues from the university who have provided invaluable guidance and resources. Thank you also to the participants who have provided important insights that enrich the analysis in this study. I also dedicate this award to my family, whose support and encouragement have been my strength in completing this study. The success of this research is the result of cooperation and support from all parties involved.

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