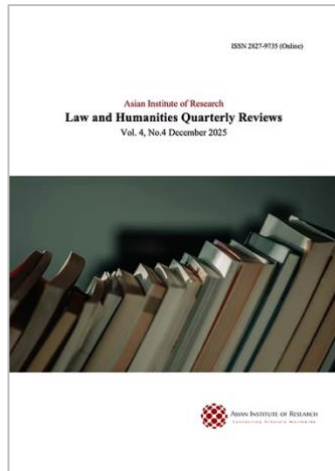




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Negotiating Ethics in Digital Communication: WhatsApp and Maqasid al-Shariah

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Abstract

This study offers a narrative review examining the use of WhatsApp through the lens of Maqasid al-Shariah (the objectives of Islamic law), thereby contributing to interdisciplinary discussions on digital culture, ethics, and social practices. The five objectives—preservation of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property are traditionally rooted in Islamic jurisprudence but here are applied to the contemporary context of social media use. By analyzing how reliance on WhatsApp may support or challenge these objectives, the paper situates Islamic ethical frameworks within broader cultural studies debates on the social and moral implications of communication technologies. The review highlights concerns around excessive and uncritical use of WhatsApp, including risks to intellectual integrity, family cohesion, and personal wellbeing, while also acknowledging its role in sustaining community, religious practice, and social connectivity. Drawing on prior studies and media reports, the paper argues that Maqasid al-Shariah can serve as a culturally grounded ethical compass for navigating the complexities of digital life. It concludes by calling for further empirical and comparative research to deepen understanding of how Islamic values and global digital cultures intersect in shaping everyday practices of communication.

Keywords: Digital Culture, Maqasid Al-Shariah, Social Media Ethics, Whatsapp, Islamic Perspectives On Technology

1. Introduction

Whatsapp has been reported to have acquired a total of 2 billion users to date and this number has been at half a billion every two years (Lin, 2021). The application has been reported be blocked in China and utilized the highest in India with an astounding population of 340 million users of the social media app (Lin, 2021). Despite its popularity among most countries, several issues have surfaced regarding the apps terms of service and its security and privacy issues. With regards to the security issues, the app is reported to be able to access personal information of its users such as phone numbers and contacts which means that it is an easy target for hackers. Despite an encryption and privacy setting embedded within the app, users are still at risk from spyware that can access user contact information, track their users' online activity and is considered a potential threat to users' privacy and personal information (Nelson, 2022). The app has the ability to track users online behavior and online interaction with others as well as have access to other private information such as time, frequency and duration of these interactions. Cybercrime is becoming increasingly prevalent today with a recorded 1300 complaints in the United States alone causing individuals and businesses to lose more than 3.5 billion due to these cybercrimes (Nelson, 2022). These cybercrimes prey on our data which is accessed from our phones and computer devices. These data

include information such as passwords, personal information, addresses, credit card information and so on and so forth. In cultural studies, such platforms are seen not merely as tools of communication, but as spaces where values, identities, and social norms are produced and negotiated. Against this backdrop, the study of WhatsApp offers a critical lens into how technology mediates ethical choices and cultural practices in contemporary digital life.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the issue with reference to the 5 objectives of Shariah which are: preservation of religion, preservation of life, lineage, intellect and property. The study will conduct a thematic analysis of the issues relating to Whatsapp from various research articles from Asia, Europe and the United States to gain various insights to the use of the app. Apart from research from literature, the latest news reports will also be included within the study in order to incorporate updated information.

2. Literature Review

Whatsapp is categorized as one among many social media applications existing in today's world which have become particularly popular within the years 2010 to date. The internet messaging application was conceptualized because of an actual need (democratising phone-based communications), and it succeeded because it was able to capitalise on almost every emerging trend like push notifications and needs like encryption (Lin, 2021).

Whatsapp was conceptualized and founded by two employees who left their job at Yahoo! It was launched in 2009 under the version Whatsapp 1.0 and later upgraded to Whatsapp 2.0. The main difference was an upgrade from push notifications to logging in with a phone number. Whatsapp differs from other social media as it features no advertisement pop-ups, no games and no gimmicks, just plain straightforward instant messaging. It was, however, later acquired by Facebook in February 2014 with the aim to collaborate data for the purpose of marketing. The main difference was Whatsapp does not have advertisements whereas Facebook has advertisements.

Apparently, Facebook did interfere with the existing WhatsApp business model and added its Facebook touch to it. Initially, data like verified phone number, status and display picture, and frequency of using WhatsApp were shared with the parent company. Then features were eventually added to make it more business-friendly (Lin, 2021).

Chapra (2008) has iterated several aspects of the Treatise on Maqasid al-Syariah for one who is not well-versed in the concept. First of all, he highlights that in order to apply the knowledge of Maqasid al-Syariah, a person needs to understand it on five different levels: First to understand its expressions and grasp its meanings according to the rules of language; second is to search for anything that may clash with the indicants; third, give by way of analogy, the rules in accordance to the divine law giver; fourth, give a specific rule to a specific act that has not yet been assigned a rule in the textual indicants; fifth; to accept some textually established rules of the Syariah without knowledge of its causes due to incapacity to comprehend the inner wisdom of Syariah.

Although, this study may not include an exhaustive approaches mentioned above, the researcher will adopt a means of **conceptual analysis** in which the universal terms have already been discussed and studied before using Maqasid Al-Syariah Framework. Conceptual Study is a means of referring to past research on the conceptualization of the 5 Objectives of Syariah.

The theoretical framework that will be used in this study is Maqasid Al-Syariah. Maqasid Al-Syariah is a combination of both inductive and deductive approaches resolving contemporary issues within the scope of Islamic worldview. The five objectives of Syariah looks at both the preservation as well as the promotion of the main Islamic elements which have been rationalized to be important as mentioned within Al-Quran. Maqasid Al-Syariah aims to facilitate benefits (Maslahah) as well as secure against harm (Mafsadah) towards these elements. In the purview of Conventional Business Ethics, the framework makes use of a virtue-based consequentialist paradigm taking into account contingencies and situations which serve for the better good (Malik, 2015).

While WhatsApp facilitates social connectivity, concerns about its overuse and potential misuse are increasingly raised. Studies in digital culture highlight issues such as misinformation, privacy breaches, and declining

interpersonal wellbeing linked to social media reliance. For Muslim communities, these concerns intersect with religious and ethical considerations, where communication is not only a social act but also a moral responsibility. Here, the objectives of Shariah (*maqasid al-shariah*)—the preservation of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property—offer a framework to evaluate whether digital practices align with or threaten essential human values. Past research in the west that has already adopted Industry 4.0 and artificial intelligence into their daily business and governments at some level have suggested that the main ethical risks that have been experienced and anticipated to progress are threats towards the following aspects: (1) maintaining justice, (2) security, (3) social equality and (4) privacy of individuals. This paper positions *maqasid al-shariah* as a culturally grounded ethical framework for analyzing the use of WhatsApp. By conceptualizing the relationship between digital practices and the objectives of Shariah, the study aims to contribute to broader interdisciplinary debates on media ethics and cultural sustainability. Rather than presenting an exclusively theological discussion, the paper situates Islamic perspectives within the global discourse on digital communication, offering insights into how culturally embedded ethical systems can enrich understandings of technology’s role in shaping social life.

3. Methodology

This narrative review employs a semi-systematic approach towards gathering data in the form of empirical studies based on the keywords in the following table.

Table 1: Search String

Database	Search String
Google Scholar Selection criteria: Articles sorted and selected by relevance	“Religion” AND “Whatsapp” AND “İslam”
	“Life” AND “Whatsapp” AND “İslam”
	“Intellect” AND “Whatsapp” AND “İslam”
	“Lineage” AND “Whatsapp” AND “İslam”
	“Property” OR “Wealth” AND “Whatsapp” AND “İslam”

Table 2: Selection Criteria of Literature

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Publication timeline	2019 - 2021 above	2018 below
Document type	Article (empirical data)	Conference paper, proceedings, book
Language	English	Other languages

The top three most relevant articles are selected from the database which are pertinent to the keywords. Only one database is selected which is comprised of open-access articles. The selection criteria is prioritized on high ranking indexed journals from renown databases such as SCOPUS, Emerald, MDPI and so on. A total of 20 empirical research articles were derived based on the semi-systematic review and were further conceptualized according to the themes of Maqasid Shariah in this narrative review. Apart from these articles, several additional sources such as white paper reports were used to support the literature. The disciplines remain inclusive of all disciplines allowing interdisciplinary synthesis, bridging Islamic ethics with cultural/media studies.

4. Findings

Cultural studies scholars often examine the ethical dimensions of digital communication in terms of power, responsibility, and the shaping of everyday life (Coudry & Hepp, 2017). WhatsApp, like other social media platforms, has been implicated in issues of information reliability, privacy, and emotional well-being. Excessive reliance on the application has been associated with digital fatigue, reduced face-to-face interaction, and diminished concentration, raising concerns about its long-term impact on individuals and communities

(Boczkowski et al., 2018; Twenge, 2019). In parallel, media ethics literature highlights how social media design encourages overuse through constant notifications and an “attention economy” model that monetizes user engagement (Zuboff, 2019). These concerns frame WhatsApp not merely as a technological tool but as a cultural phenomenon that can both enhance and erode human flourishing.

5. Preservation of religion

The first and foremost priority in this framework looks at the preservation of religion as the tantamount objective as stated in the Quran. Aspects of future of work that may go against the teachings of Quran and Sunnah will be shown at a high risk. The ethical skills play a role in mitigating this risk in order to maintain the role of a Muslim as a vicegerent on earth. Several studies showed the use of the social media to impact religion with regard to trust and harmony among the community. Rajan & Venkatraman (2021) used semantic analysis to reveal the polarizing and Islamophobic content circulating on two Instagram pages/accounts use color, religious structures, clothing, and physical features to encode stereotypes of treatment towards India's Muslim community. This has led to Islamophobic acts of violence and marginalization in biased news reporting and other social media platforms. Analogously, issues of content moderation have recently come under scrutiny as a recent whistleblower exposed the damage of certain content portrayed on social media sites which portrays a negative reality of the world influencing the way people think. Some of this content was exposed by the whistleblower and include issues relating to user privacy (the Cambridge Analytica data scandal), political manipulation (the 2016 and 2020 U.S. elections), mass surveillance accusations, encouraging addiction and low self-esteem, and content integrity, such as fake news, conspiracy theories, copyright infringement, and hate speech (Hemphill & Banerjee, 2021). Although these issues were associated with the social media Facebook, the same can be experienced through the exploitation of Whatsapp groups.

Another recent study, a mixed methods approach by Ateeq Abdul Rauf, 2022 showed the proliferated use of the social media app namely whatsapp during the COVID-19 pandemic. One focus group within the study revealed the Tablighi Jamaat members shifted to the digital space, leading to a fragmentation of the Islamic revivalist movement community due to multiple dynamics. The move towards making sense of the COVID-19 pandemic was hindered by the asymmetrical logics of the digital platform and the disruption of the very foundations of the movement authority, trust, and communal harmony.

Similarly, Rosidi et al. (2022) also conducted a study on the social media app to reveal that the use of social media can have its effects on Maqasid Al-shariah, particularly to the 5 essential principles that are necessary to be preserved in every individual's life. Rosdi et al (2022) qualitative approach was able to produce a conceptual model comprising of the effects of five essential principles (Al-Daruriyat al-khams) in social media usage and acceptance. With this knowledge, the knowledge can become both the basic and primary ethics & principles in guiding individuals during their social media use. Similarly, a quantitative study of a substantial sample of youth was used to explore the level of religiosity of behaviours while using social media such as whatsapp. The results show that consumers agree to the implementation of maqasid Shariah behaviors, while those who did not behave negatively were the strongest determinants of Muslim behaviors and religiosity (Abu Bakar et al 2018).

6. Preservation of life

The preservation of life is the second highest priority in which a quality standard of living is required in order to ensure resources are available and sustainable. Apart from standard of living, physical safety due to adoption of Artificial Intelligence may pose a threat to the safety of lives in the following aspects: autonomous-vehicles malfunctions may lead to injury or death; machine-learning models may misdiagnose illnesses, and the overreliance on inadequate equipment using predictive maintenance decisions may lead to worker injury (McKinsey Quarterly, 2020).

In relation to this particular theme, one study showed how mobile communication has both positive and negative impacts on people, such as forgetting to do important work and causing health issues. To prevent these issues, people should try to keep their phones away from children and set a time when they should and should not use

them (Md. Atiqur.R and Md. Ashraful Islam (2020). While appropriate regulations have been put into place, reports show that using mobile phones while driving and failing to use seatbelt continue to happen on a frequent basis (Kon, 2021). Studies in other parts of the world, have shown that young drivers use their smartphone screens on average 1.6 times per minute of driving. Alarming, more than half of the screen-touches are performed while the vehicle is in motion, and some occur even at speeds higher than 100 km/h (Albert & Lotan, 2018).

However, it is noted that the role of Information Technology (IT) in serving the Maqasid Al-Shari'ah should be preserved. For example, during the Covid-19 pandemic. Tarshany & Moaied (2021) studies the potential of IT to provide accurate and timely information, facilitate remote communication and collaboration among healthcare professionals and researchers, and enable remote learning and worship for students and worshippers. It also emphasizes the importance of ensuring that IT is used in a way that aligns with the objectives of Shari'ahs, such as the protection of human life, the preservation of religion, and the promotion of social justice. The authors recommend that policymakers, healthcare professionals, educators, and others work together to develop IT solutions that promote the Maaqasid AI and benefit society (Tarshany & Moaied (2021).

7. Preservation of Intellect

The preservation of the Intellect refer to the enrichment of mankind's intellect through high quality education. According to Chapra, Khan & Al Shaikh (2008), education in this sense plays a dual purpose which is: (1) enlighten members of society about the worldview and moral values of Islam as well as their mission in this world as a Vicegerent of God. Secondly, it should enable them to not only perform their jobs efficiently by working hard conscientiously but also expand the knowledge and technological base of their society. Without these two criteria, it may not be possible to enrich the intellect and enable it to contribute richly to the goal of accelerating and sustaining development. A recent study on preservation of Intellect (Aql) looks at the thematic analysis of the word Aql in the Quran, it shows that the main objective of Aql is intended to look for signs using heart, eyes and ears and use the knowledge and information from that sign to achieve something higher than worldly life (Siti Noor Mawar Abdul Rahman & Azrin Ibrahim, 2019).

One aspect of human intellect is communication which one of the most vital factors contributing towards sound intellect. Being able to communicate effectively is the challenge of the current global job market and young people who are flexible, active, innovative and creative in problem solving and decision making through effective communication of ideas (Eid, Al-Attas & Sulaiman, 2020). Communication skills have changed tremendously with the advent of social media apps such as Whatsapp. In order to prepare or adapt to the digitalization process, not only do we embrace the change but we can control it as a means to preserve our intellect as it has been one of the objectives of Shariah. Islam sets an excellent example of how communication, if practiced correct, will be a means for success in this world as well as hereafter. The communication process relies profoundly on non-verbal communication (Baguelzi, Badjenna & Keddouci, 2020) including non-written communication such as body language, tone, expression among other factors which will enable the receiver to interpret messages more effectively. Emojis may be considered a replacement to this feature however real-time experiences are more enhanced. Ending a vocal transcription with the emoji "smiling to tears" to represent a hilarious attitude regarding a remark is not the same as smiling or laughing to tears while saying the same content as an oral statement (Leone, 2020). This is what is referred to as soft skills.

Specific studies on the Whatsapp application have shown both positive and negative findings. For instance, one report showed that social networks such as Whatsapp enhance interpersonal communication skills although real-time communication is significantly reduced. The findings showed that convenience and efficiency are emphasized nowadays in terms of delivering the message across rather than real-time communication (Chan, Yong, Harmizi, 2020). Another study show that university students from Islamic universities were able to exhibit excellent Islamic values when it comes to using social media, with most using WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook. Questions related to protecting oneself and others involved the values of faith, lives, intellect, posterity and wealth. All students followed the Islamic values and values, such as Taqwa and respect, which were very important to their lives (Shompa et al., 2019). Another author used mixed methods to examine the potential of WhatsApp as a platform for delivering Islamic religious education and promoting religious values. It highlights the importance of

using WhatsApp to foster interaction, collaboration, and communication between teachers and students, as well as various learning strategies Muslim religious education teachers can use on WhatsApp. The findings of the study can be used to improve students' learning experiences (Az Zafi et al., 2021). This was supported by another study that used whatsapp as a tool for Learning the Arabic language through WhatsApp (Ando & N, 2017). qualitative findings found that the social media provides a platform for students to engage with their friends online, with simultaneous communication, reciprocal interactions, and stored communications. It also enables people to be more involved in the learning process, and those who are embarrassed to learn or lack a study companion can easily learn the language. Additionally, WhatsApp can connect to a wider community, allowing people around the world to have easy access to learning Arabic for free.

In contrast however, another study shows that the use of Whatsapp shows that there exist a substantial barrier between the sender of the message and the receiver (Naidoo, 2021). In some cases, miscommunications may, messages may be misinterpreted wrongly and will lead to conflicts (Hafiar et al, 2020). On the other hand, a quantitative research showed a positive correlation between the exposure to political-religious statuses and religious connection, with most respondents finding 5-10 updates per day and developing stronger religious associations after exposure (Saleem et al., 2022).

The trend in recent studies has seen artificial intelligence likely to replace straightforward communication such as the recent HR trends of chatbots which is an automated reply and query system for customers. Skills required for future of work will rely on interpersonal and intrapersonal skills that cannot be done by a robot, therefore to enhance their employability; youth must have exceptionally good communication skills which have been confirmed by studies by HR professionals (Torraco & Lundgren, 2020). 31% HR professionals report difficulty in recruiting candidates with effective communication skills, 32% report a lack of ability in dealing with complexity and ambiguity and 37% HR report a lack of problem-solving, critical thinking, innovation and creativity among candidates in the United States. Therefore, the approaches towards mass communication and perception towards this phenomenon are dynamically changing the way we interpret it, which requires a flexible approach towards fulfilling the objectives of Maqasid Shariah.

On the other hand, mental health has also been discerned to be affected by excessive social media time. Self-harm, depression and low self-esteem were found to exist in the excessive use of social media (Barthorpe et al, 2020). One particular study examined the psychological distress of Singapore citizens who are informed about the recent news of COVID-19 through Whatsapp. The results showed that most participants display depression, anxiety and stress symptoms after spending most of their time searching for the current updates themselves. The study also concluded that one of the effective ways to help reduce the anxiety and tension levels of the citizens is by Whatsapp, where information can be quickly and easily spread out to the public. However, the study had some limitations, as the 65 participants did not represent and generalise the whole population, and the study may differ due to age or gender of participants(Liu & Tong, 2020). Another study apprehended the app to be addictive and had a negative relationship towards the behaviours of youth and their emotional health in general (mangla et al., 2020).

From the trends of studies relating to communication skills, it can be seen that in order to gain effective communication skills, overreliance on social media should be reduced while making an effort to communicate in real-time is emphasized.

8. Preservation of property

The word *Mal* can be referred to either property of wealth (Chapra, Khan, & Al-Shaikh, 2008). The preservation of property is somewhat different to what is seen in generations before. Property may exist in different forms. In connection to this study on whatsapp, it has been found that social media poses a threat towards intellectual property (Johnson, 2020). This theme overlaps with the theme on intellect, however also has a significance towards the maintenance of property.

With reference to this particular theme, one study revealed that students in the Islamic Banking Study Program discovered that online transactions can make it easier for students to buy and sell, save time and energy, but there are still discrepancies such as goods that don't arrive. To overcome these issues, buyers must look at the description, find out the seller's reputation, check product reviews, see the terms and conditions of the order, save proof of payment, contact the seller, submit a complaint, explain the reason for the return, and return the goods within the specified time period (M.Wandisyah R.Hutagalung, Ihdi Aini, Arti Damisah, Nazmi Darmawanti Harahap, 2022). Another source showed how digital technology is also a powerful tool for promoting halal products and services as well as Muslim lifestyles among Muslim populations. This has created a structure that allows smaller shari'ah-centric groups to take part in social organizations that support their identity (Bambang, 2022).

Preservation of property/ wealth is important in the future of work as unintended consequences of Artificial Intelligence will affect national security, economic stability, infrastructure integrity, among other issues that affect society (Torraco & Lundgren, 2020). The Islamic concept of property rights according to (Mirakhor & Askari, 2010) forbids the acquisition of property ownership without effort in earning it. Initially all property is the property of the Creator. He has created natural-physical resources for the benefit of all of mankind. Disposal of an asset rules against waste, destruction, and luxurious use. God grants rights of the human collectivity to these resources. Full possession of the property does not diminish God's property right over it, nor the individuals. Mirakhor, Abbas & Askari, Hossein (2015) assert only two ways in which individuals gain legitimate property rights: (1) through their own creative labor, and/or (2) through transfers—via exchange, contracts, grants, or inheritance—from others who have gained the property rights title to an asset through their own labor.

9. Discussion

Cultural studies and media ethics literature often frame the challenges of social media in terms of privacy, autonomy, transparency, and well-being (Floridi, 2013; Zuboff, 2019). These frameworks resonate with aspects of maqasid, such as protecting intellect (through safeguarding knowledge integrity) and protecting life (through maintaining mental and social well-being). However, Maqasid adds an additional dimension by emphasizing collective responsibility and spiritual accountability. Whereas Western digital ethics often prioritize the rights of the individual, maqasid situates ethical evaluation within a communal and transcendental horizon, asking not only whether technology harms the self, but also whether it disrupts family, community, and ultimately one's relationship with God.

The juxtaposition of Maqasid and global digital ethics highlights areas of convergence and divergence. Both recognize the risks of misinformation, overreliance, and exploitation of user data, but Maqasid frames these risks in terms of undermining fundamental values of human dignity and faith. For example, the preservation of lineage aligns with global concerns about family well-being but extends the discussion to include intergenerational trust and moral responsibility. Similarly, the preservation of property resonates with debates on data ownership and cyber fraud but links these to broader ethical concerns about justice and fairness in economic transactions. This comparative approach illustrates that Islamic ethical frameworks are not isolated from global discourses but can enrich them with holistic perspectives that balance material, social, and spiritual well-being.

The findings show how the first objective on preservation of religion relates mostly to how the use of the application may affect the political factors that will impact on the religion such as through the creation of Islamophobia, creating a biased image towards the religion. Moreover, this causes a disruption in trust and mutual discord among Muslim community. This highlights the need for Maqasid Shariah to be used a conceptual model to regulate the behaviors of Muslims in the use of social media to be underpinned by the guidelines of Islamic ethics and principles.

Secondly on preservation of life, it was found that studies show both a positive as well as negative impact of the social media app towards health and safety. Again, Maqasid was highlighted as a benchmark to ensure that IT is used ethically and effectively to serve the preservation of human life.

With respect to the preservation of intellect, a lot of studies have shown how the social media has played an important role in enhancing learning and communication skills. The findings show that it has enabled Muslims to promote Islamic values and education online through a more vast audience. Although it inhibits real-time communication, it facilitates collaborative learning through a larger audience. However, there are concerns that the value of real-time verbal communication skills may be undermined with the over dependence of this app which may necessitate further research in this aspect.

Lastly, in terms of preservation of property, the findings have been able to uncover the contribution of the app in terms of facilitating online transactions and digital marketing of halal products. This phenomena was particularly enhanced during the COVID-9 pandemic which served to help those in expanding their businesses during a time which crucially reduced the mobility of physical business transactions. However, discrepancies in online transactions that do not conform to Shariat are still being questioned which shows a need for studies to explore on the possibility of regulating more closely the practice in accordance with the objectives of Shariah.

In the Islamic perspective, the consumption of all worldly aspects require moderation in order for it not to corrupt the 5 objectives mentioned above. *Maqasid al-Shariah* has a threefold tier of needs which encompass: 1) *Daruriyyat*¹, 2) *Hajjiyyat*² and 3) *Tahsiniyyat*³. These different levels of needs serve as a guidance for mankind in the use of all commodities in life in which a man is entrusted with the intellect to think and make choices accordingly. With Whatsapp, however, the investment becomes indispensable due to the fact that the mindset has already been set that the app is imperative for the purpose of daily endurance, hence the use of Whatsapp as a tool of communication becomes an added expense, a need allocated under the *Hajjiyyat* level of needs, even though, in reality, such communication are in fact under the *Tahsiniyyat* level of needs. As a disclaimer, such allocation of needs rests under the seven levels of human nafs of each and every individual as each individual varies in their level of nafs (Rassool, 2021). This notion remains to be confirmed for further research in the area. The study is not without its limitations. Based upon the literature that was sourced from the selection criteria in Table 2, there was a lack of studies that were aligned with the objective on preservation of lineage. Preservation of lineage, sometimes referred to as *Nasl* can be referred to the importance of posterity of the family institutions (Chapra, Khan & Al Shaikh-Ali, 2008). Lineage in this point is referred to family relations which may include relations between husband and wife, parents and children, close and distant relatives among others. This shows that there is a lack of literature exploring the concept of social media, namely Whatsapp in relation to this particular objective.

10. Conclusion

To conclude, the use of WhatsApp in daily life has become increasingly ubiquitous among society to such an extent that it is hard to find a person who does not have the application downloaded on their phone, much less one who does not make use of it in personal and professional contexts. It has become a cultural norm to rely on the application for communication in virtually all aspects of life. Numerous other issues may surface if properly examined, indicating potential correlations between WhatsApp use and wider social, political, and ethical concerns, not only within WhatsApp itself but across the broader social media ecosystem. Based on this concern, this study explored the literature through a narrative review using a semi-systematic method of examining the main keywords in this study. Findings from various empirical studies were further conceptualized according to the themes of *maqasid al-shariah*. Many studies highlight how WhatsApp can be associated with the preservation of intellect through education and knowledge-sharing, yet concerns arise in relation to the preservation of religion, where misinformation and unregulated use can pose political and spiritual risks. In terms of life, issues of health and mental well-being emerge alongside opportunities for health communication, especially evident during the

¹ The word *Daruriyyat* is defined as a thing that must be acquired in order to uphold the welfare for both religion and the world. If this thing does not exist, then the welfare of the world will be ruined if the activities of the world do not go well, and from the aspect of religion, Allah's punishment in the hereafter will not be spared and will be in great loss (Susilo, 2020).

² The word *Hajjiyyat* is defined as something that is very necessary to eliminate the difficulties that can lead to the loss of something that is needed, but not to the detriment of the public interest (Susilo, 2020).

³ The word *Tahsiniyyat* is to take something better than the good according to custom and stay away from bad things that are not accepted by common sense, or in other words, it means what is gathered within the limits of morality (Susilo, 2020).

COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, property considerations point to both the potential of digital marketing and the risks of unethical financial practices.

Future research is therefore needed to extend these findings by conducting empirical studies with Muslim users in different cultural contexts to examine how WhatsApp practices vary across regions and demographics. Comparative studies between Islamic ethical frameworks and Western digital ethics can provide deeper insights into how Maqasid-based evaluations intersect with global approaches to digital well-being, privacy, and data protection. Further work could also focus on longitudinal studies that explore how sustained use of WhatsApp impacts religious practice, intellectual growth, and family cohesion over time. Additionally, cross-platform research could investigate whether the challenges and opportunities identified here extend to other applications such as Telegram, Signal, or emerging AI-driven platforms, thereby situating WhatsApp within the wider digital culture ecosystem. Such research would not only deepen the scholarly understanding of Islamic perspectives on digital culture but also contribute to broader intercultural dialogues on ethics, technology, and society.

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