

## Good Governance From An Islamic Perspective: Building A Government With Integrity In The Digital Era

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### Abstract

This study addresses the gap in integrating Islamic ethical values into digital government systems, which often prioritize technical aspects over religious ethical perspectives. The core problem is how to apply Islamic governance principles, such as trust, justice, deliberation, and public interest, to enhance government integrity in the digital world and improve accountability. The research aims to develop an integrity-based governance framework combining Islamic principles with digital government techniques. It also seeks to identify relevant Islamic ethical principles for modern bureaucracy, analyze the risks and benefits of digital government for public integrity, and provide policy recommendations. A descriptive method based on a comprehensive literature review was employed, using ushul fikih and maqashid shariah approaches to assess the compatibility of Islamic values with digital government practices. The findings conclude that integrating Islamic values into modern governance is crucial for strengthening bureaucratic integrity in the digital era. Principles like *amanah*, justice, *syura*, and *maslahah* align with modern good governance concepts emphasizing accountability, transparency, and public participation. However, successful implementation requires both technological advancement and moral modernization, ensuring justice and public welfare.

**Keywords:** Good Governance; Islamic Governance; Digital Governance; Accountability; Justice; *Maṣlaḥah*; *Shura*

### INTRODUCTION

The advancement of digital technology has brought significant changes in government governance in various countries. Government digitization is considered to be able to make bureaucracy more efficient, expand the reach of public information to the public, and encourage the creation of a transparent, accountable, and integrity government. The utilization of information and communication technology allows the government and society to interact more openly, thus creating a responsive government and involving active community participation. In

this case, digital transparency is the main key in building a modern government that is open and able to adapt to technological developments<sup>1</sup>.

One of the important benchmarks in strengthening digital governance is the integrated application of digital technology in all public sectors. Digitalization plays a role in improving service quality, administrative efficiency, and strengthening the surveillance system through the provision of more accurate and easily accessible data. In addition, the use of digital systems can reduce direct interaction that has the potential to trigger abuse of authority, as well as strengthen audit records in the government administration process. Several studies show that the implementation of digital government has a positive relationship with corruption prevention efforts through increased information disclosure and public accountability<sup>2</sup>.

In Indonesia, the implementation of the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE) is a crucial part of the agenda of bureaucratic reform and improving the quality of governance. The digitalization of public services not only has an impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of services but also plays a role in building public trust in government institutions. With a more transparent and digitally documented system, the potential for corruption practices can be suppressed, while public participation and supervision can be further strengthened.

However, the implementation of digital government also poses challenges, especially related to ethics and governance of technology use. The risk of data misuse, lack of privacy protection, and potential digital access gaps are issues that need serious attention. Therefore, strengthening ethical values in the implementation of digital government becomes an inseparable need from the technology transformation process itself.

Based on the explanation above, the study of digital government not only needs to focus on technical and administrative aspects, but must also pay attention to the ethical dimension, transparency, and accountability as the main foundation of governance with integrity. This article aims to analyze the role of digital government in supporting the realization of clean and accountable governance by emphasizing the importance of transparency and corruption prevention as the main principles in the era of digital transformation.

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method that aims to describe and explain the integration of Islamic governance principles in digital government practices. The descriptive method was chosen because the study does not aim to test hypotheses or conduct empirical measurements, but rather to describe the concepts, values, and ideas that have developed in the literature related to good governance, Islamic government ethics, and the digital transformation of bureaucracy.

Data collection was conducted through library research. Data was obtained from various scientific sources, such as reference books, academic journals, research articles, policy reports, government regulations, and official publications relevant to the research topic. The literature was selected selectively to ensure its suitability to the focus of the study, then reviewed in depth to identify the main ideas regarding the principles of trust, justice, deliberation, *maslahah*, transparency, and accountability in government.

The collected data were then analyzed using descriptive content analysis. The analysis was conducted by grouping the literature based on key themes, such as Islamic ethical values, the concept of good governance, the role of digital technology in public services, and the ethical

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<sup>1</sup> Ricardo Matheus et al., "Digital Transparency and the Usefulness for Open Government," *International Journal of Information Management* 73 (2023): 102690.

<sup>2</sup> Kisman Karinda, Andi Agustang, and Arifuddin Usman, "Digital Government for Anti Corruption: A Systematic Literature Review," *International Journal of Science and Society* 5, no. 1 (2023): 199–219.

challenges arising from digitalization. Each theme was then explained and systematically linked to show how Islamic values can strengthen the integrity of governance in the digital age.

In explaining the normative aspects of Islam, this study uses a sharia analysis mechanism that refers to ushul fiqh and maqashid sharia. Principles such as *maslahah* (public interest), justice, responsibility, and prevention of harm are used as a framework for assessing the compatibility of digital policies and systems with Sharia objectives. This approach allows the study to assess the potential benefits and risks of digital technology, such as data misuse, access inequality, and weak oversight, from an Islamic ethical perspective.

Through this descriptive method, the study seeks to present a comprehensive picture of the application of Islamic values in digital governance and provide a conceptual basis for the formulation of public policies that are transparent, fair, and oriented towards the welfare of society.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

### Alignment of Good Governance Values with Islamic Principles

Various studies demonstrate that the principles of good governance from an Islamic perspective are highly compatible with the values of modern good governance. For instance, conceptual analyses of Islamic governance emphasize that Islam is not merely a system of religious rituals, but a “complete code of life” that regulates all aspects of human existence, including political and governmental order. When properly implemented, Islamic teachings are believed to produce good governance. According to one study, governance in Islam is oriented toward public welfare (*maslahah*); from an Islamic perspective, good and effective government is grounded in shari’ah and *siyasah shar’iyyah*<sup>3</sup>.

Within the framework of Islamic law, the *usūl al-fiqh* approach allows for the formulation of ideal norms such as *‘adl* (justice), *amanah* (trustworthiness/responsibility), *sidq* (transparency), *Shura* (consultation), and *mas’uliyah* (accountability) as the foundations of governance<sup>4</sup>. This perspective is widely discussed in Islamic legal literature, which views good governance as the application of fiqh principles in contemporary contexts, where *maqasid al-shariah* provide a normative basis for the realization of human rights, social justice, and the common good.

Justice occupies a central position in Islamic governance. The Qur'an explicitly affirms this principle in Qur'an, An-Nahl 16:90, which emphasizes that leaders are obligated to uphold justice in administering public authority. In this context, justice is not limited to the judicial sphere but also extends to the equitable distribution of resources, the provision of public services, and the protection of citizens' rights. Furthermore, the principle of *amanah* emphasizes that power is not an inherent right of leaders, but a trust bestowed by Allah (SWT) for the welfare of the community. In addition, the principle of *shura* further ensures that the public is granted space to participate in the policy-making process, reflecting respect for collective aspirations and societal interests.

Moreover, numerous studies indicate that governance grounded in ethical values tends to enjoy higher levels of public trust and produce more effective policies. Values such as honesty, justice, and responsibility, long emphasized in Islamic teachings, are proven to be consistent with the principles of modern good governance. From an Islamic perspective, the objective of government is not merely to achieve administrative efficiency, but also to protect citizens' rights and promote collective welfare. The framework of *maqasid al-shariah* guides to ensure that

<sup>3</sup> Ibnu Rusydi, “Good Governance According to Islamic Perspective,” *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 4 (2023): 1001–7.

<sup>4</sup> Wise Wilujeng, “Good Governance Dalam Pemerintahan Indonesia: Analisis Normatif Berdasarkan Fikih Siyasah,” *Islamic Law: Jurnal Siyasah* 10, no. 2 (2025): 203–14.

power is exercised justly, not abused, and consistently oriented toward public interest. Therefore, the application of Islamic values in public governance should not be viewed as outdated, but rather as a relevant approach that can support modern governance reforms, including in the Indonesian context.

In many countries, advances in digital technology have significantly transformed governance, particularly by enhancing administrative efficiency, transparency, and public accountability. Digitalization enables governments to manage data more openly, deliver services more rapidly, and expand interactions between the state and society. The literature indicates that digital transparency constitutes a foundation for building responsive modern governance, as the optimization of information technology allows the public broader access to data on government performance, policies, and budgets. These findings align with previous studies emphasizing the importance of clean, open, and integrity-based governance in the era of digital transformation, while also addressing how technology contributes to improved governance practices.

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies has become a key component of governmental modernization alongside the maturation of digital governance. One study found that the application of AI in the public sector enhances service quality, operational efficiency, and the accuracy of data-driven decision-making. However, these findings also reveal significant challenges, particularly related to algorithmic bias, the opacity of automated systems, and the potential misuse of personal data. Based on the literature, the principles of *maqasid al-shariah*, which emphasize justice, public welfare, and the protection of societal rights, provide a moral foundation to ensure that the utilization of artificial intelligence is not only technically effective but also fair and oriented toward public well-being.

The principles of good governance also demonstrate strong alignment with Islamic ethical values. One study emphasizes that *amanah*, justice, and moral responsibility function as an effective ethical framework for preventing corruption and building integrity-based governance. These findings are supported by the empirical study, which shows that the implementation of digital governance through information transparency, the reduction of direct contact between public officials and citizens, and the strengthening of digital audit trails significantly contribute to the reduction of corrupt practices. Accordingly, these results reinforce the argument that digitalization, accompanied by the internalization of ethical values, as emphasized in Islam, is more effective than purely technical administrative reforms.

The Electronic-Based Government System (Sistem Pemerintahan Berbasis Elektronik SPBE) has become a strategic instrument for promoting transparent and accountable governance in Indonesia. A study found that the implementation of SPBE positively affects public information openness, service efficiency, and public trust in government institutions. These findings are consistent with international research and indicate that digital transformation is a crucial component in building clean and integrity-driven governance. Nevertheless, the study also highlights that the success of digital government is highly dependent on ethical frameworks and institutional quality.

Many studies have examined digital governance, technology-based corruption prevention, and Islamic ethics separately; however, only a limited number integrate these three dimensions comprehensively. Therefore, the findings of this study contribute to the literature by demonstrating that Islamic principles are not only normatively relevant but also practically applicable to good governance practices in the digital era. The integration of Islamic ethics with digital transformation underscores that transparency, accountability, and integrity are not merely products of technological advancement but rather the result of synergy between technological progress and moral values oriented toward public welfare.

In conclusion, good governance within a modern framework should not be perceived as foreign to Muslim societies, but rather as a manifestation of Islamic values that remain relevant to contemporary needs. This strong alignment of values provides a philosophical foundation for integrating good governance principles into modern systems of government.

### **Building Participatory Governance: Shura, Accountability, and Transparency from an Islamic Perspective**

One of the key aspects of good governance is accountability and transparency. A study shows that from an Islamic perspective, accountability is not only directed toward society but also toward God. Leaders or trustees of public authority are burdened with moral and spiritual obligations to account for their actions.

Transparency in Islam is likewise regarded as an integral part of governmental ethics. Openness in public administration and service delivery is expected as a manifestation of honesty (*sidq*) and commitment to the public interest (*maslahah*). Studies on Islamic governance emphasize that every policy, transaction, and public service should ideally be conducted based on the principle of openness, enabling public oversight.

Although the principles of good governance are theoretically aligned with Islamic values, their practical implementation in Indonesia remains far from satisfactory. Empirical research indicates that corruption, collusion, and nepotism (KKN) continue to persist. This condition is largely caused by weak accountability among public officials and a lack of transparency, allowing deviant practices to recur. These findings suggest that modernization and bureaucratic digitalization alone are insufficient; efforts to improve governance will not succeed without strong moral integrity and ethical commitment<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, the Islamic approach to accountability and transparency provides a robust normative foundation for safeguarding the exercise of power.

In accordance with these values, the concept of *musyawarah (shura)* constitutes a fundamental pillar of Islamic governance. *Shura* is not merely understood as a process of discussion, but rather as an institutionalized decision-making mechanism through which public aspirations serve as a source of political legitimacy. The Qur'an explicitly affirms the principle of *shura* in Qur'an, Ash-Shura 42:38 and Ali Imran 3:159, which instructs leaders to consult the community in matters of public concern. This normative foundation demonstrates that Islamic governance promotes a non-authoritarian, participatory, and socially responsive model of political leadership.

The literature indicates that the principle of *musyawarah (shura)* in Islam has significant relevance to the principle of public participation in good governance. An ideal government from an Islamic perspective involves consultative processes, listens to public aspirations, and prioritizes the common good (*maslahah*). In contemporary governance, public participation serves as a crucial instrument to ensure that elite interests do not dominate policies but instead emerge from inclusive consultative processes. This is consistent with the Islamic principle of *shura*, which rejects the concentration of power in the hands of a few individuals. *Shura* also functions as a mechanism of social control by providing space for society to express criticism and input, which leaders, as trustees (*amanah*), are obliged to consider. This aligns with deliberative democracy, which places justice and public welfare at the center of governance<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Adinda Dewi Asmara et al., "Penerapan Nilai-Nilai Islam Dalam Good Governance Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Administrasi Negara* Vol 6, no. 02 (2022).

<sup>6</sup> Mohammed Veqar Ashraf-Khan and Mohammad Shahadat Hossain, "Governance: Exploring the Islamic Approach and Its Relevance for the Modern Context," *International Journal of Islamic Khazanah* 11, no. 1 (2021): 29–40.

In the context of modern good governance, elements of participation and public transparency derived from *shura* are viewed as capable of enhancing policy legitimacy. Several studies conclude that *shura* provides an ethical foundation for governance that is responsive to the broader public interest, while also supporting accountability and justice in decision-making processes.

By implementing *shura*, public decisions do not become the exclusive authority of a small elite, but rather the result of collective deliberation and consideration. This approach enhances policy legitimacy and fosters a sense of ownership among the community. Such a model demonstrates that modern democratic systems and good governance can be contextualized within the framework of Islamic values.

As previously discussed, accountability and transparency are fundamental to building clean and integrity-based governance in the digital era. However, recent empirical studies indicate that accountability mechanisms focused solely on laws and procedures do not always succeed in reducing corruption, collusion, and nepotism (KKN). Research in Muslim-majority countries shows that religious value-based accountability significantly influences bureaucratic behavior, particularly through improved audit compliance, fiscal transparency, and the quality of public financial reporting. One study found that auditor competence and independence have a significant impact on audit quality, which is a prerequisite for effective accountability in organizations grounded in Islamic values. Furthermore, research on the contribution of governance principles in zakat institutions demonstrates a strong relationship between value-based accountability and public acceptance of governance performance.

The argument that Islamic accountability can only be effectively implemented through data-based transparency and formal oversight systems is reinforced by previous discussions. Global empirical evidence over the past five years indicates that countries with higher levels of fiscal transparency and integrity tend to achieve better scores in corruption control. Nevertheless, according to recent Transparency International reports, digitalization and public information openness do not automatically improve Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) scores. These findings confirm that digital transformation in public governance can only be effective when accompanied by the internalization of Islamic ethical values that emphasize *amanah* (trustworthiness), justice, and moral responsibility as the core principles of governance oriented toward public welfare.

In conclusion, accountability, transparency, and *musyawarah* (*shura*) have proven to be essential pillars of Islamic governance that are closely aligned with the principles of modern good governance. Accountability and transparency strengthen the integrity of public administration, while *shura* ensures that policy processes remain participatory and inclusive. When these values are applied consistently, governance becomes more just, responsive, and possesses stronger legitimacy in fulfilling the needs of society.

### **Digital Transformation as an Instrument of Islamic Good Governance in Indonesia**

Digital transformation in public governance has become a strategic agenda for Indonesia in realizing good governance grounded in Islamic values. The implementation of the Electronic-Based Government System (Sistem Pemerintahan Berbasis Elektronik SPBE) provides opportunities to create a bureaucracy that is more transparent, efficient, and responsive. Various digital innovations, such as online population administration, e-government services, and public aspiration channels, have increasingly facilitated access to public services and reduced bureaucratic complexity that has traditionally created opportunities for illegal levies. Public information transparency through digital systems also functions as a mechanism of societal oversight over state budget management, in line with the Islamic principles of *hisbah* and *sidq* (honesty). Furthermore, monitoring technologies such as audit trails support early

detection of potential violations, enabling justice and accountability to be enforced more effectively in accordance with Islamic teachings.

On the other hand, this modernization is not without significant challenges. Inequality in digital infrastructure has resulted in technology-based services being more accessible in urban areas than in remote, frontier, and underdeveloped regions (3T areas). Public digital literacy also remains uneven, limiting the ability of some citizens to utilize online services optimally. More importantly, persistent bureaucratic corruption reflects a weak internalization of *amanah* values among public officials. In addition, data security and privacy concerns have emerged as new risks that require serious attention through robust regulatory frameworks. Without moral reform among public officials and consistent law enforcement, digitalization risks becoming merely a superficial transformation that fails to improve the substantive quality of public services.

As discussed earlier, digital transformation through SPBE is widely regarded as a strategic instrument for enhancing transparency, efficiency, and accountability in public administration. Digitalization reduces direct interaction between government officials and citizens, expands access to public information, and strengthens audit trails. However, recent studies suggest that the success of digital transformation should be assessed based on tangible outcomes, particularly its impact on reducing corruption and increasing public trust, rather than solely on input and process indicators, such as the number of online services or levels of technology adoption. Given that many countries have already implemented e-government initiatives, outcome-based evaluation has become essential, as improvements in governance quality have not always been significant.

A cross-country study concludes that bureaucratic digitalization is effective in reducing corruption only when it is supported by a strong culture of accountability; conversely, in countries with weak institutions, digital technologies are susceptible to manipulation by political and economic elites<sup>7</sup>. The literature further indicates that digital technologies, when combined with active public participation, such as through online reporting systems and e-procurement platforms, enhance governmental transparency and accountability and contribute to anti-corruption efforts. In addition, reports by the OECD and the World Bank emphasize that bureaucratic digitalization without substantive transparency and meaningful citizen participation risks becoming merely symbolic reform and may even give rise to new forms of abuse of authority through the manipulation of digital systems. Therefore, digital transformation should be regarded as a supportive instrument rather than a standalone solution for achieving good governance.

From an Islamic perspective, the principles of *amanah* (trustworthiness) and *taqwa* (God-consciousness) function as ethical mechanisms that complement external oversight based on systems and regulations. If digitalization is not accompanied by the internalization of *amanah* values, corrupt practices may simply migrate into digital spaces. Consequently, the evaluation of SPBE implementation should encompass not only technical and administrative indicators but also social and moral outcomes, such as reductions in corruption, improvements in service equity, and increased public trust. This integration of digital transformation with Islamic values demonstrates that technology in public governance should serve public welfare (*maslahah*), rather than merely administrative efficiency.

Accordingly, the success of implementing Islamic good governance is largely determined by the quality of governmental human resources. Character education grounded in Islamic ethics must be positioned as a fundamental pillar in shaping the integrity of civil servants. Values such as *amanah*, justice, and moral responsibility should guide leaders who recognize that authority is a divine trust for which they will ultimately be held accountable. The principle of *taqwā* serves

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<sup>7</sup> Bari, Chimhundu, and Chan (2022) "Dynamic capabilities to achieve corporate sustainability: a roadmap to sustained competitive advantage"

as a stronger form of internal control than external supervision, as it entails spiritual awareness of the moral consequences of every action. Thus, morality is not merely a complementary element but the core of a clean and professional bureaucracy.

If technological development is accompanied by ethical transformation within the bureaucracy and equitable access for all citizens, Indonesia can build a system of governance that is both modern and spiritually grounded. This approach not only enhances the quality of public services but also reaffirms Islam's mission to safeguard public welfare (*maslahah*), positioning modernization as a means to dignify and empower society.

### **The Model of Islamic Good Governance Integration in Government Modernization**

The integration of Islamic principles into the modernization of public governance can be achieved through five main pillars. First, a spiritual foundation in the form of prophetic leadership that instills the values of *amanah* (trustworthiness), justice, and responsibility as the core of bureaucratic conduct. This approach is consistent with the model of bureaucratic fiqh based on *maqasid al-shariah*, which serves as a normative framework for creating governance that is just, accountable, and oriented toward public welfare (*maslahah*), as discussed in studies of Islamic governance that link Islamic ethics with contemporary administrative demands<sup>8</sup>.

Second, digital transformation through the optimization of the Electronic-Based Government System (Sistem Pemerintahan Berbasis Elektronik SPBE) and the standardization of public services to make them more transparent, efficient, and responsive. Such digital transformation provides structural support for accountability and information openness. Integrative studies demonstrate that e-government initiatives aligned with Islamic values not only enhance technical efficiency in public service delivery but also strengthen legitimacy and public trust when coupled with the principles of transparency and accountability. Furthermore, contemporary literature on the digitalization of zakat and ZIS (zakat, infaq, and sadaqah) services from a *maqasid al-shariah* perspective shows that the principles of justice (*al-'adl*) and the protection of wealth (*hifz al-mal*) are realized through digital features that improve access, ensure transparent distribution, and enhance accountability in the management of public funds.

Third, socio-communal collaboration that encourages the active involvement of religious institutions and civil society in overseeing public policy through participatory mechanisms such as *Shura*. The literature indicates that the practice of *Shura* provides an ethical foundation for responsive public participation in modern governance, while also creating space for public aspirations to influence strategic policymaking. This strengthens the principle of deliberative participation, which supports policy legitimacy and effective social control.

Fourth, digital access justice is achieved through equitable infrastructure development and the enhancement of digital literacy to ensure that all citizens can inclusively benefit from modern public services. Empirical research in the context of digital governance emphasizes that without equitable access, digital initiatives may exacerbate social inequalities and undermine the objective of public welfare. Within the Islamic framework, the development of digital literacy is not merely a technical skill but also part of *hifz al-'aql* (the protection of intellect) and *hifz al-nafs* (the protection of life), which are core objectives of the shari'ah aimed at safeguarding human dignity and social well-being.

Fifth, the strengthening of regulation and data security to protect citizens' rights and privacy, and to build trust in digital systems. Robust regulatory frameworks are aligned with Islamic principles of justice and rights protection (*hifz al-'ird*), ensuring that digital mechanisms respect individual privacy and prevent the exploitation of data in ways that harm the public. This

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<sup>8</sup> M Arfan Ahwadzy et al., "Fiqh of Bureaucracy and Public Governance in Indonesia: A New Paradigm Based on Maqasid Al-Shariah," *Islamic Review: Jurnal Riset Dan Kajian Keislaman* 14, no. 2 (2025): 197–222.

is particularly important in the digital era, as secure and ethical governance plays a central role in ensuring that technological innovation does not erode public trust or violate societal ethical norms.

As noted earlier, the *maqasid al-shariah* framework has a strong normative correlation with the integrated five-pillar model of prophetic leadership, digital transformation, social collaboration (*Shura*), access justice, and regulatory strengthening. To enable empirical validation and practical implementation in public policy, this normative model must be operationalized into measurable indicators, as emphasized in contemporary governance literature. Recent studies demonstrate that *maqasid al-shariah* principles can be interpreted as performance measures encompassing justice, integrity, and social welfare. For example, prophetic leadership and *amanah* may be assessed through indicators such as ethical compliance, budget transparency, and levels of public trust. Similarly, *Shura* can be measured through high levels of public participation, institutionalized policy consultation mechanisms, and access to public aspiration channels. This approach confirms that Islamic values are not confined to ethical discourse but can be translated into performance indicators relevant to modern governance.

Empirical validation of this integration model has also been supported by research conducted over the past five years that developed a governance measurement framework based on *maqasid al-shariah*. A study shows that maqasid indicators can be used to evaluate organizational performance multidimensionally, including aspects of social justice and institutional integrity, which are in line with the objectives of good governance<sup>9</sup>. These findings are relevant to the preliminary argument that digital transformation and bureaucratic reform require clear measurement tools to assess their impact on public welfare. Thus, the five-pillar model in this study has the potential to be validated through comparative policy studies, simulations of the implementation of SPBE based on Islamic values, or the development of an Islamic governance index that integrates indicators of digital governance, bureaucratic accountability, and public participation. Such operationalization is important so that the Islamic good governance integration model is not only conceptual, but also applicable and empirically tested in the context of modern governance.

From these models, several practical implications can be immediately derived. Governments should accelerate digital transformation grounded in anti-corruption principles, strengthen civil servant training curricula based on Islamic leadership ethics, and ensure accessible and equitable public information disclosure. At the same time, society should be encouraged to play an active role as a social watchdog through digital participation channels. These efforts are expected to position Indonesia as a successful example of modern governance that remains firmly rooted in Islamic values, ensuring that digitalization delivers not only efficiency but also integrity and public welfare for all citizens.

### **The Role of Ulama, Academics, and Civil Society in Strengthening Islamic Good Governance**

Ulama occupy a strategic position as sources of moral legitimacy and shapers of public norms within contemporary Muslim societies. Academic research indicates that ulama function as moral authorities who provide ethical guidance and Islamic values that are essential in shaping public behavior and reducing corrupt practices through preaching (*da'wah*), the issuance of fatwas, and public policy advocacy<sup>10</sup>. This role as moral norm-setters is also highlighted in studies on the involvement of ulama in public policy from the perspective of *siyasah shar'iyyah*, which

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<sup>9</sup> Dasmadi et al (2024) "Maqasid Shariah and Organizational Performance: A Systematic Literature Review"

<sup>10</sup> ADJens Koehrsen, "Muslims and Climate Change: How Islam, Muslim Organizations, and Religious Leaders Influence Climate Change Perceptions and Mitigation Activities," *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change* 12, no. 3 (2021): e702.

demonstrate that ulama are not confined to the religious sphere but also exert significant influence on policymaking processes and the ethics of governance more broadly.

In this context, collaboration between ulama, state institutions, and civil society has been shown to strengthen the impact of public ethics. For example, the involvement of ulama in anti-corruption initiatives in Indonesia through moral and religious approaches has been facilitated by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), which has partnered with religious leaders as moral agents in anti-corruption education for the public.

The second key actor is academia, which supplies scientific evidence and policy models capable of integrating Islamic values into modern governance practices. Research conducted by universities and academic institutions demonstrates that academics play a crucial role in providing conceptual frameworks, policy evaluations, and training programs for bureaucrats that support the internalization of *amanah*, accountability, and transparency within bureaucratic systems. Academics also contribute to the development of Islamic governance indicators, such as integrity and accountability based on *maqasid al-shariah*, that can be used to assess the effectiveness of public governance.

Meanwhile, civil society, including Islamic organizations and faith-based organizations (FBOs), performs an important function as a public watchdog, a provider of alternative services, and a bridge between citizens and the state. Empirical studies in Indonesia show that organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah are not only active in social welfare activities but also contribute to policy oversight and advocacy for transparency and social inclusion, both of which are essential components of good governance. Their role in monitoring state actions and promoting public ethical values reinforces the significance of Islamic organizations within civil society.

The interaction among these three actors, ulama, academics, and civil society, creates a synergy that strengthens moral legitimacy, empirical evidence, and social control, particularly in the digital era, where transparency and public participation have become increasingly important. The collaborative governance approach involving these actors has been analyzed as an effective model for strengthening good governance in Muslim-majority countries, such as Indonesia, through cooperation among civil society organizations, academic institutions, and government bodies<sup>11</sup>.

The implications for Islamic good governance are substantial. The normative legitimacy provided by ulama helps cultivate a culture of integrity and public ethics; the contributions of academics supply data, indicators, and policy models that reinforce accountability; and oversight by civil society ensures that government digitalization proceeds in a transparent, accountable, and inclusive manner.

However, as highlighted in critical governance studies, this collaborative relationship also entails potential challenges. Cooperation among ulama, academics, and civil society may generate conflicts of authority, particularly between the state as the holder of formal power, ulama as sources of moral legitimacy, and technocrats as policy designers guided by instrumental rationality. The effectiveness of ulama in governance, as noted in the literature, depends significantly on their independence from political power. When ulama become overly aligned with the state, their moral legitimacy weakens, and their role risks being reduced to an instrument for legitimizing government policies<sup>12</sup>. This dynamic is relevant to Indonesia and other Muslim-majority countries, where close institutional ties between religious authorities and

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<sup>11</sup> Maulana Mukhlis and Imam Mustofa, "The Role of Civil Society Organizations in Combating Religious Based Radicalism in Indonesia: A Critical Analysis from the Perspective of Collaboration Governance," *Saudi Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences (SJHSS)* 7, no. 4 (2022): 155–63.

<sup>12</sup> Koehrsen (2021) "Muslims and climate change: How Islam, Muslim organizations, and religious leaders influence climate change perceptions and mitigation activities"

the state may create tensions between the critical moral role of ulama and the demands of political stability.

Beyond conflicts of authority, the literature also underscores the risk of the instrumentalization of religion in governance practices. The involvement of religious actors in the public sphere does not automatically lead to stronger ethical governance; instead, religion may be exploited for short-term political interests, ultimately reducing it to a symbolic source of political legitimacy. Studies suggest that the presence of religion in the public domain does not always preserve its ethical norms, particularly when institutional boundaries between religion and the state are blurred. In media and public discourse, religion is often framed symbolically, obscuring its normative and critical role as a moral ethic and increasing the risk that it becomes a tool of political legitimization in the absence of clear regulatory frameworks.

For the Islamic good governance model proposed in this study, these findings highlight the importance of positioning ulama and civil society as independent moral oversight actors, while academics serve as evidence-based counterbalances. Accordingly, collaboration among the three actors can be effective only when accompanied by mechanisms that protect independence, ensure role transparency, and limit political intervention. Under such conditions, Islamic values can function genuinely as public ethics that strengthen accountability and public welfare (*maslahah*), rather than as instruments of political legitimization.

Based on these scholarly insights, several practical recommendations can be offered for policymakers and researchers. These include the establishment of multi-stakeholder advisory boards involving ulama, academics, and civil society to develop ethical standards for digital governance; the development of bureaucratic training curricula that incorporate Islamic ethics, anti-corruption principles, and digital literacy; and the strengthening of the role of Islamic organizations in digital oversight through open data initiatives and participatory mechanisms. In addition, structured dialogue between ulama and technocrats should be facilitated to align religious ethical perspectives with emerging technological issues such as data privacy and artificial intelligence. Finally, greater emphasis on evidence-based applied research will help assess the impact of collaboration among these three actors on governance indicators such as transparency and public satisfaction.

### **Future Prospects: Building a Government Architecture Based on Islamic Ethics and Smart Technology**

The future of governance in the digital age cannot be separated from the development of smart technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), blockchain, and integrated digital systems. Contemporary research shows that these technologies form a new foundation in modern governance architecture because they can improve the efficiency of public services, accelerate decision-making, and expand administrative transparency. A study confirms that AI has the potential to be a catalyst for bureaucratic reform if regulated through a mature governance framework. However, its implementation raises serious ethical issues: algorithmic bias, privacy violations, and human resource competency gaps. Therefore, technological transformation must be accompanied by strict regulations oriented towards public integrity<sup>13</sup>.

One innovation that is widely discussed in modern governance literature is blockchain technology. With its immutable ledger, high transparency, and automation capabilities through smart contracts, blockchain offers great opportunities to strengthen government accountability. Research shows that the use of blockchain in sectors such as digital identity, public auditing, and e-procurement can reduce opportunities for fraud, improve data verification efficiency, and

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<sup>13</sup> Amal Aarab et al., "Integrating AI in Public Governance: A Systematic Review," *Digital* 5, no. 4 (2025): 59.

encourage the creation of open administrative systems. This is in line with the principles of accountability, trust, and transparency that are at the core of Islamic governance.

From an Islamic perspective, the adoption of smart technology is not only assessed in terms of technical efficiency, but also in terms of its compatibility with the values of maqasid al-shariah. Studies in various journals emphasize that AI and digital systems must be directed towards maintaining the five objectives of sharia: religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. Technology can only be considered beneficial if its use does not violate the principle of justice, does not cause algorithmic discrimination, and is capable of preventing social harm, such as data exploitation or unequal access. Thus, the Islamic ethical framework becomes a fundamental foundation in translating technological innovation into public policy<sup>14</sup>.

Furthermore, the literature on technology ethics from an Islamic perspective emphasizes the need to develop a technology governance framework that combines moral values with technical mechanisms. This includes regular algorithm audits, transparency in automation processes, independent oversight, and the implementation of strict accountability standards. Justice ('adl) and trustworthiness should not merely be abstract values, but must serve as operational guidelines in the design of digital systems used by the government. Technology should be designed not only for administrative efficiency, but also as a means of expanding social welfare.

The prospects of Islamic good governance also require collaborative integration between key actors, namely the government, academics, scholars, and the technology sector. Research confirms that modern governance architecture cannot rely solely on technocracy. There is a need for cross-disciplinary collaboration to produce technology regulations that are fair, ethical, and in accordance with the principles of maqasid al-shariah. Through this collaboration, the government gains scientific support from academics, moral legitimacy from religious scholars, and technical innovation from the technology sector, resulting in comprehensive and benefit-based policies.

However, the application of smart technology in government also faces serious challenges. The digital divide between regions and social groups, the limited competence of officials in managing digital systems, and the risk of disinformation are obstacles that must be overcome immediately. A study highlights the importance of building Islamic digital literacy as part of a long-term strategy. Digital literacy is not merely a technical skill, but also includes an understanding of the ethics of technology use, awareness of digital privacy, and the capacity to actively participate in technology-based governance processes. With an Islamic value-based approach that prioritizes justice, public welfare, and the protection of public rights, this literacy can ensure that the public is not only users of technology, but also critical actors in the oversight of digital governance<sup>15</sup>.

The development of artificial intelligence (AI) and distributed technologies such as blockchain opens up enormous opportunities for improving the efficiency, transparency, and accountability of government, as mentioned in the introduction. However, recent literature emphasizes that without an operational ethical framework, the adoption of AI in the public sector risks reinforcing structural injustice, algorithmic bias, and privacy violations, especially in developing countries with limited institutional capacity. Studies on AI management failures show that AI technology is used in an unaccountable and difficult-to-monitor manner due to a lack of regulation, poor data literacy among officials, and the absence of algorithmic audit mechanisms. A purely normative approach, including Islamic ethics, will not be effective in this context without being translated into clear technical standards, evaluation procedures, and oversight

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<sup>14</sup> Fatimah Yanti Sinaga, "Etika Penggunaan Kecerdasan Buatan Dalam Perspektif Islam: Mitigasi Risiko Dan Optimalisasi Manfaat," *Tarbiyah Bil Qalam: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Dan Sains* 9, no. 1 (2025).

<sup>15</sup> Aarab et al., "Integrating AI in Public Governance: A Systematic Review."

systems. These findings are in line with international reports emphasizing that controlling artificial intelligence requires an implementation framework capable of linking system design.

From an Islamic perspective, these needs have led to the development of an Islamic AI Ethics Framework that is not only based on the values of *maqasid al-shariah* but also functionally equivalent to global regulatory frameworks such as the EU AI Act. Contemporary research confirms that Islamic principles such as justice ('*adl*), trustworthiness, and protection of rights (*hifz al-nafs* and *hifz al-'aql*) can be applied to artificial intelligence governance using concrete evidence, such as model transparency, personal data protection, and public accountability mechanisms. This method is in line with the latest AI ethical frameworks around the world, which emphasize human-centered AI, institutional oversight, and clear legal responsibility for algorithmic outcomes. Therefore, the future success of good Islamic governance depends heavily on the ability to integrate Islamic values into a usable and measurable artificial intelligence ethical framework. Thus, technological advances will not only improve administrative efficiency but also maintain justice, public welfare, and public trust in the implementation of digital governance.

In a way, the prospects of smart technology-based government architecture and Islamic ethics offer great opportunities to build efficient, fair, and moral governance. The combination of technical innovation and the principles of *maqasid al-shariah* can ensure that digital transformation not only brings administrative progress but also strengthens integrity, transparency, and community welfare.

## CONCLUSION

The digitization of bureaucracy through SPBE presents a great opportunity to build a cleaner and more efficient government. Faster service processes, budget transparency, digital complaint channels, and automated audit systems can reduce opportunities for corruption. However, technology is not the ultimate solution. Real challenges, such as the digital divide, low public literacy, weak data security, and a bureaucratic culture that is still rooted in corruption, collusion, and nepotism, show that digitization without moral integrity only results in superficial modernization.

To that end, an administration with integrity must be built on two foundations: technological innovation and the internalization of Islamic ethical values within the civil service. Leaders and civil servants must understand power as a trust, not a privilege. Spiritual awareness becomes an "internal control" that complements regulations and digital systems. In addition, public participation based on the value of *shura* needs to be strengthened so that policies are not only legal but also socially and morally legitimate.

In conclusion, truly ethical digital governance can only be achieved if system modernization goes hand in hand with moral modernization. The integration of Islamic values is not merely a symbol of identity, but a normative framework capable of guiding technology to produce justice and benefit. The government and society have equally important roles: the government builds transparent and fair systems, while society monitors and actively participates. With this approach, digitization becomes not only a technical transformation but also an instrument for realizing clean, humane governance that is in line with Islamic values.

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