



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION, SHARIA GOVERNANCE, AND ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE IN ISLAMIC MICROFINANCE INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract: This study examines the relationship between digital transformation, Sharia governance, and organizational performance in Islamic Microfinance Institutions (IMFIs) within the context of achieving the objectives of *maqasid al-shariah* in the digital era. The research employs a qualitative approach using a literature review method based on secondary data collected from 30 scholarly articles and relevant institutional reports published between 2015 and 2025. The findings indicate that digital transformation plays a significant role in improving operational efficiency, expanding financial inclusion, enhancing customer services, and strengthening institutional competitiveness. Furthermore, effective Sharia governance ensures that technological innovation remains aligned with Islamic ethical principles, transparency, accountability, and compliance requirements. The integration of digital transformation and Sharia governance contributes positively to organizational performance by supporting financial sustainability, social impact, and stakeholder trust. The study also highlights that the implementation of digital technology within IMFIs can facilitate the achievement of *maqasid al-shariah*, particularly in the preservation of wealth, intellect, and social welfare. Therefore, a balanced integration of technological innovation and Islamic governance is essential for fostering sustainable development and long-term organizational success in Islamic microfinance institutions.

Keywords: Digital Transformation; Sharia Governance; Organizational Performance; Islamic Microfinance Institutions; Maqasid al-Shariah; Financial Inclusion.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the financial services industry, including Islamic Microfinance Institutions (IMFIs). Digital



transformation enables financial institutions to enhance operational efficiency, improve service accessibility, reduce transaction costs, and expand financial inclusion among underserved communities. In the context of Islamic microfinance, digital technologies such as mobile banking, financial technology (fintech), cloud-based management systems, and digital payment platforms have become strategic tools for strengthening institutional sustainability and competitiveness. The adoption of digital innovation is increasingly viewed as a necessity rather than an option, particularly in response to changing customer expectations and the growing demand for accessible financial services. Previous studies have highlighted that digital transformation contributes significantly to organizational agility, customer satisfaction, and financial performance by facilitating faster decision-making processes and improving service delivery mechanisms (Vial, 2019; Verhoef et al., 2021). Consequently, Islamic microfinance institutions are encouraged to embrace digitalization as part of their long-term development strategy to remain relevant in an increasingly digital economy.

Despite the growing emphasis on digital transformation, Islamic Microfinance Institutions operate within a unique governance framework that distinguishes them from conventional financial organizations. Sharia governance serves as a critical mechanism to ensure that all institutional activities comply with Islamic principles, including the prohibition of *riba* (interest), *gharar* (uncertainty), and unethical business practices. Effective Sharia governance encompasses various dimensions, such as Sharia supervisory boards, compliance monitoring systems, ethical leadership, and accountability mechanisms that safeguard institutional legitimacy and stakeholder trust. Research has demonstrated that robust governance structures positively influence organizational effectiveness, risk management, and stakeholder confidence (Mollah & Zaman, 2015; Grassa, 2016). In Islamic financial institutions, governance is not solely concerned with regulatory compliance but also reflects the broader objective of achieving *maqasid al-shariah* through socially responsible and ethically grounded financial practices. Therefore, understanding the interaction between



digital transformation and Sharia governance has become increasingly important for sustaining institutional growth and maintaining public trust.

Organizational performance remains a central concern for Islamic Microfinance Institutions due to increasing competition, technological disruption, and evolving regulatory environments. Performance in IMFIs extends beyond financial indicators and includes operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, social impact, outreach effectiveness, and institutional sustainability. Recent literature suggests that digital transformation can directly improve organizational performance by streamlining processes, enhancing data management capabilities, and facilitating innovation-driven service delivery (Bharadwaj et al., 2013; Warner & Wäger, 2019). At the same time, strong governance practices contribute to better strategic decision-making and organizational accountability, which ultimately support performance enhancement. However, the successful realization of these benefits depends on the institution's ability to integrate technological innovation with governance mechanisms that align with Islamic ethical values. This integration becomes particularly relevant in Islamic microfinance institutions, where technological advancement must be balanced with adherence to Sharia principles to ensure sustainable organizational development.

Although numerous studies have independently examined digital transformation, Sharia governance, and organizational performance, empirical evidence investigating the interrelationship among these three constructs within Islamic Microfinance Institutions remains limited and fragmented. Existing research predominantly focuses on Islamic commercial banks or conventional financial institutions, leaving Islamic microfinance organizations relatively underexplored. Furthermore, prior studies often analyze digital transformation and governance separately, resulting in insufficient understanding of how Sharia governance may influence or strengthen the impact of digital transformation on organizational performance. This gap highlights the need for a more comprehensive



investigation that integrates technological, governance, and performance perspectives within the specific context of Islamic microfinance institutions. Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of digital transformation and Sharia governance on organizational performance in Islamic Microfinance Institutions and to provide empirical evidence regarding their interconnected roles in enhancing institutional effectiveness, sustainability, and competitive advantage in the digital era.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a literature review design to examine the relationship between digital transformation, Sharia governance, and organizational performance in Islamic Microfinance Institutions (IMFIs). Qualitative research is appropriate for exploring and interpreting social phenomena, organizational practices, and theoretical developments through the analysis of existing knowledge and documented evidence rather than numerical measurement (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The literature review method was selected because it enables a comprehensive synthesis of previous findings, facilitates the identification of theoretical patterns, and provides a deeper understanding of emerging issues related to digital transformation and governance practices in Islamic financial institutions (Snyder, 2019). This approach is particularly relevant for developing conceptual insights into how technological innovation and Sharia-based governance mechanisms influence organizational outcomes in IMFIs.

The study relied exclusively on secondary data collected from scholarly publications and authoritative institutional sources. A total of 30 peer-reviewed journal articles were selected from internationally recognized academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Emerald Insight, Taylor & Francis Online, and Google Scholar. In addition, supporting data were obtained from reports, policy documents, and publications issued by organizations such as the Islamic Financial Services Board (IFSB), the



Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI), the World Bank, and other relevant institutions. The selected literature was published between 2015 and 2025 to ensure that the study captured contemporary developments in digital transformation, financial technology adoption, Sharia governance practices, and organizational performance measurement. The inclusion criteria focused on studies directly addressing digital innovation, Islamic financial governance, institutional effectiveness, and performance enhancement within Islamic financial organizations (Vial, 2019; Verhoef et al., 2021).

Data collection followed a systematic literature review procedure consisting of identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final selection of relevant documents (Page et al., 2021). Keywords such as *digital transformation*, *Sharia governance*, *Islamic microfinance*, *Islamic financial institutions*, *organizational performance*, and *financial technology* were used during the search process. The collected data were analyzed using thematic content analysis, a method that enables researchers to identify recurring themes, conceptual relationships, and patterns across multiple studies (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis involved data reduction, thematic categorization, interpretation, and synthesis of findings to develop a coherent understanding of the research phenomenon. To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the results, source triangulation was conducted by comparing evidence obtained from academic journals, institutional reports, and regulatory publications (Miles et al., 2014). Through this methodological approach, the study aims to generate a comprehensive understanding of the role of digital transformation and Sharia governance in improving organizational performance within Islamic Microfinance Institutions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

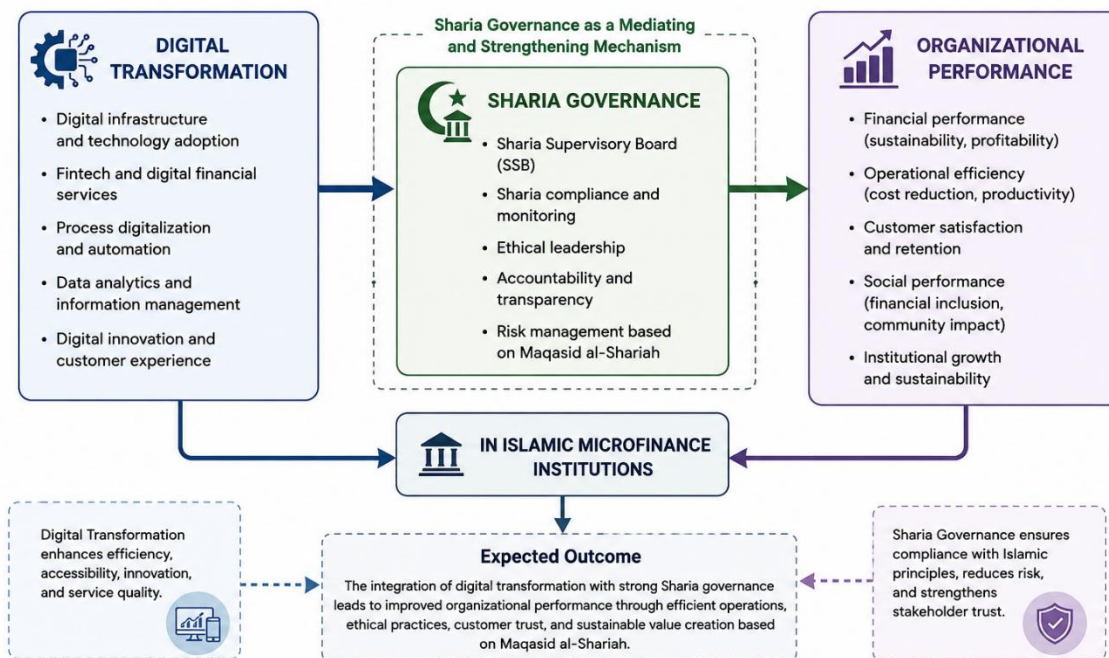
Digital Transformation, Sharia Governance, And Organizational Performance In Islamic Microfinance Institutions



The conceptual framework illustrates that **digital transformation** serves as a strategic driver for enhancing the organizational performance of Islamic Microfinance Institutions (IMFIs). The process begins with the adoption of digital technologies, including digital infrastructure, financial technology (fintech), process automation, digital payment systems, cloud computing, and data analytics. These technological innovations enable Islamic microfinance institutions to improve operational efficiency, reduce transaction costs, accelerate service delivery, and expand financial inclusion among underserved communities. Through digital transformation, institutions can provide faster, more accessible, and more reliable financial services while strengthening customer engagement and improving institutional responsiveness to market changes. Previous studies have emphasized that digital transformation enhances organizational capabilities by enabling institutions to optimize resources, improve decision-making processes, and develop innovative service models that support long-term sustainability (Vial, 2019; Bharadwaj et al., 2013). Consequently, digital transformation becomes a critical foundation for achieving superior organizational outcomes in an increasingly competitive and technology-driven environment.



Digital Transformation, Sharia Governance, And Organizational Performance In Islamic Microfinance Institutions



Source: Adapted from Vial (2019), Verhoef et al. (2021), and Mollah & Zaman (2015), illustrating the relationship between digital transformation, Sharia governance, and organizational performance in Islamic microfinance institutions.

The context of Islamic financial institutions, the implementation of digital transformation cannot be separated from the principles of **Sharia governance**. Unlike conventional financial institutions, Islamic microfinance organizations must ensure that all technological innovations, operational activities, and financial transactions comply with Islamic law and ethical standards. Sharia governance functions as a supervisory and control mechanism that guides institutional activities according to the principles of maqasid al-shariah. This governance framework includes the role of the Sharia Supervisory Board (SSB),



compliance monitoring systems, ethical leadership, transparency, accountability, and risk management practices grounded in Islamic values. Effective Sharia governance ensures that digital innovation does not compromise religious compliance while simultaneously strengthening stakeholder trust and institutional legitimacy. According to Mollah and Zaman (2015), strong Sharia governance contributes significantly to organizational effectiveness by improving oversight mechanisms and promoting responsible management practices. Similarly, Grassa (2016) argues that governance quality plays an essential role in enhancing institutional credibility and financial performance within Islamic financial organizations.

The framework further suggests that **Sharia governance acts as a mediating and reinforcing mechanism** between digital transformation and organizational performance. While digital technologies create opportunities for efficiency and innovation, their effectiveness depends largely on the presence of governance structures capable of directing technological implementation toward organizational objectives and Islamic ethical standards. In this regard, Sharia governance helps institutions manage risks associated with digitalization, including cybersecurity challenges, operational risks, data privacy concerns, and potential deviations from Islamic financial principles. Governance mechanisms also facilitate strategic alignment between technological investments and institutional missions. As digital transformation progresses, effective governance ensures that innovation remains accountable, transparent, and socially responsible. This alignment is particularly important in Islamic microfinance institutions because organizational success is measured not only through financial outcomes but also through social impact, ethical conduct, and community empowerment. Therefore, Sharia governance strengthens the positive effects of digital transformation by providing an ethical and regulatory framework that supports sustainable institutional development (Mollah & Zaman, 2015; Grassa, 2016).



The final outcome of the framework is reflected in **enhanced organizational performance**, which encompasses financial, operational, social, and institutional dimensions. Financial performance may be observed through increased profitability, sustainability, portfolio quality, and resource efficiency. Operational performance includes improvements in productivity, service quality, transaction speed, and cost management. Social performance reflects the institution's ability to promote financial inclusion, support micro-entrepreneurs, reduce poverty, and contribute to community welfare. Institutional performance is associated with long-term growth, stakeholder satisfaction, reputation enhancement, and organizational resilience. Research indicates that digital transformation contributes directly to these performance dimensions by facilitating innovation, improving customer experience, and strengthening competitive advantage (Verhoef et al., 2021). At the same time, governance mechanisms ensure that organizational growth remains aligned with Islamic values and stakeholder expectations. As a result, Islamic microfinance institutions that successfully integrate digital transformation with robust Sharia governance are more likely to achieve sustainable performance and maintain public trust in a rapidly evolving financial landscape.

Overall, the framework demonstrates a dynamic and interconnected relationship among digital transformation, Sharia governance, and organizational performance. Digital transformation serves as the primary catalyst for institutional modernization and innovation, while Sharia governance provides the ethical and regulatory foundation necessary to ensure responsible implementation. Together, these factors contribute to superior organizational performance by enhancing efficiency, strengthening accountability, improving customer satisfaction, and supporting sustainable value creation. The model also highlights the importance of balancing technological advancement with Islamic ethical principles to achieve long-term institutional success. Therefore, the integration of digital transformation and Sharia governance represents a strategic pathway through which Islamic Microfinance Institutions



can enhance their competitiveness, fulfill their social responsibilities, and achieve the broader objectives of maqasid al-shariah in the digital era.

Discussion: Objectives of Maqasid al-Shariah in the Digital Era

The rapid development of digital technology has transformed the operational environment of Islamic financial institutions, including Islamic Microfinance Institutions (IMFIs). In the contemporary era, digital transformation has become an essential strategy for enhancing organizational competitiveness, improving service quality, and expanding financial inclusion. However, from an Islamic perspective, technological advancement should not solely focus on efficiency and profitability but must also contribute to the achievement of **maqasid al-shariah**, the higher objectives of Islamic law aimed at promoting human welfare and preventing harm. According to Auda (2008), maqasid al-shariah encompasses the preservation of religion (*hifz al-din*), life (*hifz al-nafs*), intellect (*hifz al-aql*), lineage (*hifz al-nasl*), and wealth (*hifz al-mal*). These objectives provide a comprehensive framework for evaluating whether technological innovations generate benefits for individuals and society. Therefore, digital transformation within Islamic financial institutions should be designed and implemented in a manner that supports ethical values, social justice, and sustainable development rather than merely maximizing economic gains (Auda, 2008). The integration of digital technology with Islamic principles is increasingly important because financial institutions operate in a rapidly changing environment characterized by technological disruption, evolving customer expectations, and growing competition. Consequently, digital innovation should function as a tool for realizing the objectives of maqasid al-shariah and strengthening the social mission of Islamic finance (Dusuki & Abdullah, 2007).

One of the most significant contributions of digital transformation to maqasid al-shariah is the protection and development of wealth (*hifz al-mal*). Islamic microfinance



institutions play a crucial role in providing financial services to low-income communities, micro-entrepreneurs, and individuals who are often excluded from conventional banking systems. Through digital platforms such as mobile banking, electronic payments, digital financing applications, and online customer service systems, IMFIs can significantly improve financial accessibility and operational efficiency. These technologies reduce transaction costs, accelerate service delivery, and increase outreach to underserved populations, particularly in rural and remote areas. As noted by Vial (2019), digital transformation enables organizations to create value through enhanced connectivity, process optimization, and innovative service delivery. Similarly, Verhoef et al. (2021) argue that digitalization facilitates organizational agility and customer-centric service models that improve overall performance. In the context of maqasid al-shariah, these developments contribute directly to wealth creation, economic empowerment, and poverty alleviation. By providing broader access to financial services and supporting entrepreneurial activities, digital transformation enables individuals to improve their economic conditions through lawful means while reducing financial vulnerability. Consequently, technology-driven financial inclusion represents a practical manifestation of Islamic economic objectives aimed at promoting prosperity and social welfare.

Beyond economic benefits, digital transformation also contributes to the preservation and development of intellect (*hifz al-aql*), which is another fundamental objective of maqasid al-shariah. The digital era is characterized by unprecedented access to information, knowledge, and educational resources. Islamic financial institutions can utilize digital technologies to improve employee training, strengthen customer financial literacy, and enhance organizational learning capabilities. Advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data analytics, cloud computing, and digital knowledge management systems facilitate evidence-based decision-making and continuous organizational improvement. According to Warner and Wäger (2019), digital transformation strengthens dynamic



capabilities that enable organizations to adapt to environmental changes and sustain long-term competitiveness. Furthermore, digital educational platforms provide opportunities for customers and stakeholders to gain a better understanding of Islamic financial principles, financial management, and entrepreneurial development. This process aligns closely with the Islamic emphasis on knowledge acquisition and intellectual growth. Through the effective use of digital tools, institutions can create learning environments that encourage innovation, critical thinking, and informed decision-making. Therefore, technological advancement not only supports operational effectiveness but also contributes to the broader objective of intellectual empowerment and human development envisioned by maqasid al-shariah (Auda, 2008).

Another critical dimension of maqasid al-shariah in the digital era concerns ethical governance, accountability, and social responsibility. Although digital technologies create numerous opportunities, they also introduce significant challenges such as cybersecurity threats, data breaches, privacy concerns, fraud risks, and unethical business practices. Consequently, Islamic financial institutions must ensure that digital innovation is supported by strong governance structures and effective oversight mechanisms. Sharia governance plays a central role in this regard by ensuring that all organizational activities remain compliant with Islamic principles and ethical standards. Mollah and Zaman (2015) emphasize that effective Sharia governance enhances organizational performance by strengthening accountability, transparency, and stakeholder confidence. Similarly, Grassa (2016) argues that governance quality positively influences institutional credibility and financial sustainability. Within a digital environment, Sharia governance serves as a mechanism for monitoring technological applications, ensuring ethical conduct, and protecting stakeholder interests. It also helps institutions address emerging risks associated with digitalization while maintaining public trust. The integration of governance principles with technological innovation reflects the



maqasid objective of protecting society from harm and promoting justice in economic transactions. Therefore, ethical digital governance is essential for ensuring that technological progress contributes positively to social welfare rather than generating new forms of inequality or exploitation.

Ultimately, the realization of maqasid al-shariah in the digital era requires a holistic approach that integrates technological innovation, ethical governance, and social responsibility. Digital transformation should not be viewed merely as a technological process but as a strategic mechanism for advancing human well-being, economic justice, and sustainable development. Islamic microfinance institutions possess a unique opportunity to leverage digital technologies in support of these objectives because their mission inherently combines financial services with social empowerment and community development. By aligning digital strategies with the principles of maqasid al-shariah, institutions can improve organizational performance while simultaneously fulfilling their religious and social obligations. Such integration enables IMFIs to achieve financial sustainability, enhance customer satisfaction, strengthen stakeholder trust, and generate positive social impact. As technological change continues to reshape the financial sector, the successful implementation of maqasid-oriented digital transformation will become increasingly important for ensuring that innovation serves the broader interests of humanity and contributes to the realization of a just, inclusive, and sustainable economic system (Dusuki & Abdullah, 2007; Verhoef et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

Digital transformation has emerged as a critical factor in enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of Islamic Microfinance Institutions. The findings demonstrate that digital technologies improve operational efficiency, service accessibility, and financial inclusion



while enabling institutions to respond more effectively to changing market demands. However, the successful implementation of digital transformation requires strong Sharia governance to ensure compliance with Islamic principles and ethical standards. Sharia governance strengthens accountability, transparency, and stakeholder confidence, thereby maximizing the positive impact of technological innovation on organizational performance. The study concludes that the integration of digital transformation and Sharia governance significantly contributes to improved financial, operational, and social performance within Islamic microfinance institutions. Furthermore, such integration supports the realization of *maqasid al-shariah* by promoting wealth preservation, knowledge development, social welfare, and economic justice. Therefore, Islamic microfinance institutions should continue investing in digital innovation while maintaining robust governance mechanisms to achieve sustainable growth and long-term organizational success in the digital era.

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