

## THE VIEW OF MAQASID AL-SHARI'AH ON VACCINATION: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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**Abstract:** *Little is known about strategic communication interventions that uses Islamic data, sources, and arguments to address vaccine misunderstanding that leads to vaccine hesitancy phenomenon. Aiming to develop a strategic communication approach to counter the widespread misunderstanding on vaccination related to religious matters, a systematic literature review was conducted by synthesising Islamic data sources and arguments from relevant religious publications, statements, and fatwas. Using a modified framework known as PICO (Population, Interest, Context) to design the main research questions, 46 studies from Google Scholar, MyCite, Scopus, Ebscohost, and Fatwa databases were reviewed in this research. The study found that maqasid al-shari'ah appeared to be one of the sources of Islamic laws used to support and encourage vaccine uptake globally. Therefore, this paper will present the five maqasid al-shari'ah that were used to argue the need of vaccination in protecting the basic goals of Islamic law. They were the protection of religion (Hifz al-din), life (hifz al-nafs), intellectual (hifz al-'aql), lineage (hifz al-nasl), and wealth (hifz al-mal). It was discovered that, the most widely used maqasid al-shari'ah in supporting vaccination were the protection of life and religion since the use of vaccine helps to control and eradicate severe diseases over the past years. In addition, scholars also argued that vaccination serves as a preventive strategy*

*that improves Muslims' welfare. This paper also lists out several Qur'anic verses and hadith to support these views. Therefore, this study concludes that intervention from Islamic perspectives is vital to help address vaccine religious concerns. Further, this will serve as an important effort by researchers in the communication field to approach health matters using Islamic understanding to convey that Islam is all encompassing.*

**Keywords:** *Health Communication, Maqasid al-shari'ah, Systematic Literature Review, Vaccine Refusal, Vaccine Literacy.*

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## Introduction

Misunderstanding of vaccine-related issues has led to the refusals of vaccination globally. In some scenarios, the misunderstanding is evident through the way people oppose vaccination using wrongly interpreted *Qur'anic* verses and *hadith* to back up their stance. Zainudin et al. (2018) stated that vaccine refusal in the Muslim community was largely due to phony religious arguments by individuals who do not have any qualifications in health and sciences. The consequences of these attitudes are detrimental for societal wellbeing as it has led to refusals in vaccine uptake. One of the reasons of this refusal as argued by Chan et al. (2022) was due to complacency potentially induced by a lack of transparency in policymaking and media misinformation. People remain hesitant to get vaccinated even the harms that Covid-19 have brought to the world are evident. The lack of understanding, little awareness, and uncertainties about how Covid-19 vaccines work could be other factors of this hesitancy.

According to Ahmed et al. (2018), the number of cases of polio, diphtheria, measles, tetanus, and pertussis in Muslim-majority countries such as Pakistan, Nigeria, Nepal, Egypt, Cameroon, Guinea, and Malaysia have been steadily increasing since 2012. Ahmed et al. mentioned that the number of polio cases in Pakistan more than doubled from 58 in 2012 to 138 in 2013. Measles outbreaks were also found in 2015 “[i]n the northern states of Nigeria with 3110 measles cases and 206 deaths [while] in Egypt, 5000 children were infected” (Ahmed et al., 2018, p. 153). In addition, the World Health Organization's (WHO) mission to eradicate polio in Nigeria was called off in 2005 due to parents' reluctance to acknowledge vaccination (Sulaiman, 2014). Sulaiman (2014) found that immunization coverage in Muslim countries is recorded at 68 percent. Malaysia also recorded the resurgence of the already eradicated disease since 1990s, polio. The resurgence not only led to infections but also deaths. The Malaysian Ministry of Health announced a 75.9 percent increase in measles cases in 2018, as reported in The Star newspaper on 23 January 2019. Six of the 1467 cases involved unvaccinated children dying. Pertussis killed 22 people in 2018, 19 of whom were unvaccinated. The Star further reported, five diphtheria cases resulted in deaths, with four of the victims being unvaccinated. Similar issues could be observed in the uptake of Covid-19 vaccination. Despite the threat continuously brought by the evolving Covid-19 variants, still people refused to take Covid-19 vaccines and their boosters.

Since much of the previous studies have focused mainly on non-religious perspectives (e.g., Ghazali et al., 2022; Mohamed et al., 2022; Ghazali et al., 2021, Ghazali et al., 2020), this paper will synthesise Islamic sources and arguments from relevant available religious publications, statements, and fatwas to address vaccine refusal and hesitancy. Using a systematic literature review (SLR) analysis, this study will contribute to provide input for the strategic communication approach to counter the widespread vaccine misinformation using Islamic viewpoints. The paper will also answer why vaccination is necessary according to Islamic

perspectives. Further discussion will be made as to why adopting vaccination is critical for preserving and promoting a safe and prosperous *ummah*. Ultimately, this paper is hoped to monitor, minimise, and potentially eradicate all vaccine-preventable diseases from society.

### Methodology

The main objective of this research is to synthesise sources, claims, and arguments based on Islam that can be used to reduce confusion pertaining to vaccination and promote vaccine uptakes globally. To achieve this objective, this study used a framework under a systematic literature review (SLR) strategy, particularly in data collection, sampling, and data analysis. This part will explain the SLR procedures undertaken in this research and their important component to the successful, reliable, and valid SLR.

The framework of this SLR was based on Butler et al. (2016) and Shaffril et al. (2020) which involved a proper work plan. A modified framework from PICO (Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome), known as PICO (Population, Interest, Context) was selected to aid in designing a question for this study. The main question “why vaccination is necessary based on Islamic perspectives?” and “What are the Islamic sources supporting vaccination?”

The SLR was carried out from February until June 2022 on Scopus, Google Scholars, MyCite, Ebscohost, and Fatwa databases. A total of 5076 literature were recorded. However, only 286 articles were selected to go through the screening process as most of them were not accessible. Through hand search and citation search, 43 more studies were included, and a total 329 studies were selected to go through the next stage. At the screening stage, only 64 literatures were relevant for appraisal. A total of 76 duplications of documents, 109 studies not related to Islam and not accessible, and 80 studies in Malay language published before 2016 were excluded and removed from the review. At the appraisal stage 18 more studies were removed as they covered the non-human vaccination and Islamic arguments were found not supporting vaccination. The lead researcher finalised that only 46 studies or literature were eligible for the SLR.

Following a similar approach undertaken by Shaffril et al. (2020), this study conducted integrative review in which studies using varied research designs were included. As Whittemore and Knafl (2005) suggested, qualitative or mixed-method approaches is among the best way to analyse integrative data as it allows researchers to perform iterative assessments across primary data. Good integrative review could result in the “direct applicability to practice and policy” (Whittemore et al., p. 546). While in synthesising and analysing extracted data, this study used a qualitative technique. Equal number of articles were assigned to seven researchers to read them thoroughly particularly in the abstract, specific sections on Islam and vaccines, results, and discussion. At this phase, the study research questions guided the review process resulting in a compilation of answers that was tabulated according to items in a charting table developed for this study.

Next, in identifying themes and sub-category, the lead researcher conducted thematic analysis with a close assistance of one review author. The framework of thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006) was adopted in which the researchers were reminded to note initial patterns, generate themes, review themes, and define and name themes while analysing data. In finding similarities and relationship between themes, this study also adopted Boeije’s (2002) approach to constant comparative analysis where comparison will be made between abstracted data. This measure is important to enhance the internal validity of the research findings. Further, the data were checked by other co-researchers as a form of evidence confirmation.

## Results

As synthesised from the systematic literature review (SLR), one of the evidently Islamic justifications used to encourage vaccine uptake is the *maqasid al-shari'ah*. Although there were other Islamic justifications found from the SLR, it should be noted that this paper will only focus on the *maqasid al-shari'ah*. In situations where there is no direct evidence from the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, *maqasid al-shari'ah* or the goals of Islamic laws provide understanding on how and why vaccination is necessary. Out of 46 studies reviewed, 14 justified the need of vaccination from the lens of *maqasid al-shari'ah* – Table 1.

**Table 1: Characteristics of Studies Included in the SLR**

No.	Studies	Year	Region	Vaccine types covered in the study	Religion	Life	Intellect	Lineage	Wealth
1	Abidin et al.	2016	Malaysia	MMR, DTP, TB, PL	/	/	/	/	/
2	Ali et al.	2017	Malaysia	RV	/	/	/	/	/
3	Fateh, M., & Islamy, A.	2021	Indonesia	C19, SV		/			
4	Hannan et al.	2021	Indonesia	C19, SV, MD, PB, AZ	/	/	/	/	/
5	Harahap, Z. A. A., & Siregar, D.	2021	Indonesia	MR	/	/	/	/	/
6	Jamaludin, M. A., & Ramli, S. N. H.	2021	Malaysia	PB	/	/	/	/	/
7	Khan, N. J. M., & Zulkipli, Z. N.	2018	Malaysia	MMR, DTP, HIB, PL, HB, CP	/	/	/	/	/
8	Nedjai, R., & Ouinez, K.	2021	Malaysia	C19, PB, MD	/	/			
9	Nordin, M. M.	2016	Malaysia	RV, PL		/			
10	Sangaji et al.	2021	Indonesia	C19, SV, AZ		/			
11	Sholeh, M. A. N., & Helmi, M. I.	2021	Indonesia	C19, SV	/	/	/	/	/
12	Zahari et al.	2021	Malaysia	C19, PB, PL	/	/	/	/	/
13	Zain, M. F., & Hasanudin.	2021	Indonesia	C19, SV, R		/			
14	Zainudin et al.	2018	Malaysia	DTP, RV, MMR, BX, PL	/	/	/	/	/

  

MMR: Measles, Mumps, Rubella	TB: Tuberculosis	CP: Chicken Pox	SV: Sinovac
HIB: Haemophilus influenza type B	RV: Rotavirus	HB: Hepatitis B	MD: Moderna
MR: Measles, Rubella	PB: Pfizer-BioNTech	BX: Biothrax	C19: COVID-19
DTP: Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis	PL: Poliomyelitis	R: Rubella	AZ: AstraZeneca

*Maqasid al-shari'ah* refers to the objectives or goals set forth by Islamic law for the accomplishment of benefits to humanity. The attainment of benefits to humanity in the world and the hereafter affairs is the main goal of Islamic law. In theory, the revelation of the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* go hand in hand with the development of *maqasid al-shari'ah*. *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, as a comprehensive guidebook, provided a framework for values, embodying what is seen necessary for the establishment of a balanced community. While Islamic *shari'ah* is a way of life, *maqasid al-shari'ah* encapsulates its goals (Sarkawi et al., 2017). In general, there are five *maqasid al-shari'ah* that need to be safeguarded. The protection of these elements from harm is the basic goal of Islamic law. Besides *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* to derive the ruling of vaccination, Muslim scholars consider the protection of these elements namely the protections of religion (*Hifz al-din*), life (*Hifz al-nafs*), intellectual (*Hifz al-'aql*), lineage (*Hifz al-nasl*), and wealth (*Hifz al-mal*) (Abidin et al., 2016; Ali et al., 2017; Hannan et al., 2021; Harahap & Siregar, 2021; Jamaludin & Ramli, 2021; Khan & Zulkipli, 2018; Sholeh & Helmi, 2021).

The following sections will discuss these five core *shari'ah*-mandated foundations for appropriate individual and societal understanding in the uptake of vaccine.

#### **The Preservation of Religion (Hifz Al-Din)**

As explained in Harahap and Siregar (2021), on the bases of realising benefit (*tahqiq al-masalih*) and eliminating damages (*dar'u al-mafasid*), *maqasid al-shari'ah* maintains the existing legal rules. The reviewed studies suggested that vaccination acts as a preventive measure in the promotion of the wellbeing of a Muslim to allow the performance of religious obligations (Nedjai & Ouinez, 2021; Zahari et al. 2021). Zainudin et al. (2018) emphasised that vaccination is an act of reforming (*islah*) the Islamic community for the improvement of well-being associated with *maqasid al-shari'ah*.

*Hifz al-din* is referred to a broad strategy that involves the necessities and religious rules that pertain to human existence and life, as well as putting every effort to oppose anything that goes against the religion of Allah SWT, such as *bid'ah*, *syirik*, and other such things. *Hifz al-din* is regarded as the top priority (Al-Khadimi, 2001) in Islam. At an individual level, every person should guard against factors that could undermine their faith and cause them to lose their life direction. While at the communal level, it is important to prevent any attempts to weaken religion and its fundamentals, including protecting Muslim nations and their jurisdiction, ensuring that the future generations of Muslims continue learning about and practising their faith. In relation to vaccination, this responsibility could only be preserved when ones are in good, healthy conditions and free from diseases that could be prevented via vaccination. In other words, having good health ensures Muslims to perform religious obligations, hence preserving their religion.

#### **The Preservation of Life (Hifz Al-Nafs)**

Closely related to the protection of religion is the preservation of life. Islam has not only established legislations to prohibit the livings from being killed, but also policies to ensure their welfare for both physically and spiritually, which include provisions to secure necessities like food, drinks, shelter, marriage, and clothing, as well as laws that prohibits all forms of self-indulgence. Islam forbids murder, whether it is suicide or the killing of another person's life. The perpetrator will get the punishments of *diyat*, *qisas*, or *kaffarah* whether the homicide is committed with or without the intent to kill.

In this discussion, based on the SLR, 10 studies argued that vaccination could be perceived as a preventive measure to preserve life. This is because vaccines could be used to reduce morbidity and mortality in the country by preventing vaccine-preventable illnesses that can harm human health and life. Vaccines have been confirmed to eliminate and control infections of severe disease such as smallpox over a decade (Zahari et al., 2021). This is further evident in the fact that vaccination has successfully preserved millions of lives (*hifz al-nasf*) around the world. In short, vaccination programmes protect human life by preventing expected harms (Ali et al., 2017; Fateh & Islamy, 2021; Hannan et al., 2021).

### **The Preservation of Intellect (Hifz Al-'Aql)**

Human varies from other living creatures due to the endowed intellect, which includes the potential to identify, make distinctions and judgments, and solve challenges in life. It is intellect or '*aql*' that distinguishes human being from animals. Therefore, Allah condemns any injurious elements that destroy human intellect such as alcohol, drugs, and prohibited actions. Islam also places a strong focus on the significance of using '*aql*' in order to thrive in this world. All human behaviours should be conducted using '*aql*', which is guided by the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, to prevent their deviating behaviours (Saad & Rajamanickam, 2021). This explains why human being is given the responsibility to perform religious duties and other responsibilities because they have '*aql*' (Najati, 1992).

Knowledge plays a vital role in sharpening the mind to think about something for the benefit of all mankind (Zamzam, 2022). Thus, people should improve their awareness regarding vaccination by learning from reliable and authentic sources, not from fake news, lies and propaganda. According to Zainudin et al. (2018), since Islam encourages peace, respect, justice, and all other qualities that promotes serenity, vaccination programme is hoped to assist the community to be less anxious by knowing that their families and community are protected from severe diseases. This justification can be linked with the need of preserving intellect.

### **The Preservation of Lineage (Hifz Al-Nasl)**

The combination of *hifz* and *al-nasl* can be interpreted as the preservation and conservation of the offspring and continuity (*muwalat*). Also known as the *hifz al-nasab*, scholars distinguished that *hifz al-nasl* as the preservation of elements to allow the emergence of descendants and offspring as referred by Ibn 'Ashur (cited in Siyam & Karim, 2018). This preservation includes healthy environment, proper upbringing of children, and taking care of organs such as the uterus for women. Having said that, producing healthy offspring could not be successful without these elements. On the other hand, *hifz al-nasab* is the protection of descendants from the perspective of an offspring's legality in accordance with Islamic law, for instance, through marriage (Wan Halim & Desa, 2022).

Vaccine uptake fits into the preservation of *al-nasl* because it is more concerned with protecting humankind from getting infected from diseases (Zahari et al., 2021; Zainudin et al., 2018). For illustration, pregnant women who adhere to their vaccination schedule may guarantee the preservation of their progeny by indirectly protecting their unborn baby from any vaccine-preventable diseases that may be acquired during pregnancy. Some vaccines further protect the unborn baby to ensure their health while still in the womb of the mother.

### **The Preservation of Wealth (Hifz Al-Mal)**

Wealth or fortune is a blessing from Allah so human can lead better lives. All of the resources that Allah has given access to humanity, along with the privileges and benefits that come with

proprietorship, are collectively referred in Islam as *al-mal* (Zailani et al., 2022). *Shari'ah* has allowed the pursuit of a living and approved transactions, exchanges, and commerce in order to preserve humans' wealth. *Shari'ah* also prohibits wastage, *riba'*, theft, robbery, fraud, and devouring other people's property unfairly. Human, as the successors of this earth, owns everything including money with the wills of Allah. *Hifz al-mal* can be divided into five categories from ownership protection, development and acquisition, harm prevention, value preservation to circulation (Dusuki & Bouheraoua, 2011).

Therefore, it has become an obligation for human to preserve this wealth (Zahari et al., 2021). This preservation would not be possible if one is not in a good or healthy condition. Because, more often than not, sick people have to pay exorbitant medical fees, particularly those who suffer from critical illness. This is the reason why taking vaccination to prevent from getting infected by diseases becomes necessary as a cost-effective measure for wealth preservation (Zainudin et al., 2018). By preventing the occurrence of diseases and concentrating on pre-emptive measures, the incidents involving a disease's notorious complications could be reduced. Besides, preventing has been always a much cheaper option than curing.

### Discussion and Conclusion

In general, the synthesised SLR showed that vaccine uptake was supported by all the five goals of Islamic law (*maqasid al-shari'ah*), which answered why vaccination is necessary in Islam. By relying on the five *maqasid al-shari'ah*, it can be clarified that some vaccines containing impermissible ingredients should not be immediately forbidden or rejected. Simply because the processes and substances used in the production of vaccination are forbidden, the decision of their permissibility should be based on thorough debate by Muslim scholars based on the current setting and needs. It is vital to note, although the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* have no direct jurisdiction on vaccination, they remain the main sources to derive rules related to vaccination besides other sources such as *al-qawa'id al-fiqhiyyah* (the Islamic legal maxims), *Isltilahah* and *istihlak* and others with *maqasid al-shari'ah* as the highlight of this study.

In view of this, the society should rely on qualified Islamic scholars and institutions as their main references to understand under which circumstances impermissibility becomes permissible. Since some Muslims are limited in the level of intellect to decide issues of *fiqh*, reliance on the experts becomes obligatory. This is asserted by Asni et al. (2021) that the mandatory instructions of vaccination issued by the government are in line with the religious instructions which could be seen in *Surah An-Nisa'*, verse 59. The verse addressed the obligation of people to follow the guideline made by the government which is meant for the public interests. The verse also showed that people should obey not only Allah and the Messenger, but the authority which is akin to the government. Blind rejection of vaccines could be considered as an act of injustice to oneself. Every human being should be reminded that they are accountable to Allah in preserving themselves from diseases through vaccine uptake. Therefore, it is hoped that by raising vaccination literacy among Muslim families using Islamic evidence, they gain better understanding and knowledge of vaccination from the perspective of Islam. This effort will eventually help in preserving and promoting a safe and prosperous *ummah*.

The main purpose of this paper is to systematically review the Islamic justifications of vaccination to address vaccine refusal phenomenon. This study offers some noteworthy contributions for practical usage and the body of knowledge. From the review, vaccination is needed for the accomplishment of benefits to humanity according to the *maqasid al-shari'ah* or

the goals of Islamic law. It is important to emphasise that the role of vaccines is a critical necessity to rescue lives as evident in the spread of Covid-19. Although some people are still reluctant to take vaccination, it is vital to keep them informed of the importance of vaccination by addressing issues that have led to their refusal, one of which is religious-related. Understanding from the *maqasid al-shari'ah* is one of the efforts to ensure that Muslims understand all rules made which come with specific aims in protecting the objectives of the Islamic laws. Therefore, this synthesised Islamic evidence is hoped to be used to address vaccine-related misconceptions.

As previously stated, this study is hoped to potentially eradicate all vaccine-preventable diseases from society. In doing so, increasing vaccine literacy from the Islamic perspectives is one of the key ways. For example, honest and open communication on vaccine religious-related issues such as permissibility or *halalness*, vaccine manufacturing and ingredients, and Fatwa (Ahmed et al., 2018) should be promoted to allow the public to make informed decisions on vaccine uptake. In line with strategic communication, targeting vaccine hesitant individuals before the vaccine refusals should be the main focus as the latter usually have a fixed idea for rejecting vaccination (Ghazali, et al., 2021). In addition, it is pertinent to address refusals specific concerns since vaccine hesitancy is a dynamic behaviour (Ghazali et al., 2021). Persuading the group will be easier if one could “make a connection with what they believe to be true or with some of their values,” (Ihlen, 2020, p. 165). Therefore, the results of this SLR will contribute to address Islamic related matters that led to vaccine hesitancy. It can be argued that the SLR results are valuable considering other studies mostly focused on communicating strategically from the non-Islamic perspective.

In conclusion, this paper should be regarded as one of the serious efforts by Muslim researchers to explore health-related matters while incorporating Islamic understanding. The inclusion of Islamic views will assist in building the narrative that Islam covers all matters from science, history, psychology, finance, communication to politics, to name a few. On this note, this paper should be considered by researchers in the communication field to recognise Islamic views on vaccination and to call for more future research on matters related to science and health. In particular, the results of this study could contribute knowledge and information to be used by vaccine advocates such as the health professionals and media providers to promote awareness about the necessity of vaccination while highlighting the dangers of anti-vaccination.

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