



Research Article

Bridging Tasawwuf and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah: An Ethical Foundation for Muslim Social Welfare in Contemporary Societies

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Abstract: This study explores the integration of Tasawwuf (Islamic mysticism) with Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah (objectives of Islamic law) to propose a more ethical and effective social welfare framework. The research emphasizes the importance of combining the spiritual dimensions of Tasawwuf, such as Ihsan (excellence) and 'Adl (justice), with the legal and ethical framework of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, which seeks to preserve essential human interests such as religion, life, intellect, progeny, and wealth. This integrated approach is positioned as a comprehensive model for social welfare that addresses not only material needs but also promotes spiritual growth and ethical conduct. By blending these two frameworks, the study proposes a holistic view of social welfare that fosters empathy, justice, and social care. The findings highlight that Tasawwuf contributes to the ethical application of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, enhancing social responsibility and promoting greater community cohesion and solidarity. The study also discusses the practical implications of this integration in contemporary Muslim societies, including its potential to reshape existing welfare programs. Recommendations for future research and policy development emphasize the need for further exploration of this integrated approach in Islamic finance, Takaful, and Zakat, as well as the creation of frameworks that balance legal compliance with ethical and spiritual principles. The results suggest that incorporating Tasawwuf alongside Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah can significantly improve the ethical foundation of social welfare programs, fostering a more just and compassionate society.

Keywords: Islamic Finance; Maqāṣid Al-Sharī'ah; Social Justice; Social Welfare; Tasawwuf Ethics

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1. Introduction

Islamic social welfare is an integral component of the broader Islamic ethical system, rooted deeply in Shariah principles. These principles govern not only financial transactions but also encompass ethical conduct in all aspects of life, including family relations, business dealings, and social interactions. The Islamic framework for social welfare is founded on moral imperatives such as justice, fairness, and compassion, which serve as a guiding force in alleviating social disparities and fostering community solidarity. Key social welfare mechanisms, such as Zakat (mandatory almsgiving), Sadaqah (voluntary charity), and Qard Hasan (benevolent loans), have historically played significant roles in addressing poverty and promoting social justice (Kamal, 2025). Furthermore, Islamic teachings emphasize socio-economic justice, advocating for equality and fairness within both economic and social relationships (Shaukat et al., 2024).

Despite the comprehensive nature of Islamic social welfare principles, existing frameworks often focus predominantly on legal aspects, leaving the spiritual dimension of Islam underexplored in the context of social welfare. This limitation overlooks the significant role of Tasawwuf, or Sufism, which represents the spiritual core of Islam and emphasizes personal purification and ethical development. Tasawwuf offers profound insights into the

cultivation of empathy, justice, and compassion, all of which are essential for achieving effective social welfare outcomes. Therefore, integrating the ethical teachings of Tasawwuf with the legal principles outlined in Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah (objectives of Islamic law) can provide a more holistic approach to social welfare (Meerasahib, 2024).

The objective of this paper is to highlight the limitations of current frameworks by incorporating the spiritual dimension of Tasawwuf alongside the legal framework of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah in the pursuit of a more comprehensive and ethical model of social welfare. By doing so, this paper aims to propose an integrated foundation for social welfare that addresses both the legal and spiritual needs of contemporary Muslim societies. Such an approach could bridge the gap between legal regulation and moral/spiritual values, ensuring a more equitable, compassionate, and holistic welfare system (Jomaa Ahmed, 2020; Kamal, 2025).

Social welfare in Islam is an integral part of its ethical and legal framework, designed to ensure the well-being of individuals and society. Traditionally, Islamic social welfare has been grounded in the principles of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah (objectives of Islamic law), which aim to preserve key human interests: religion (dīn), life (nafs), intellect ('aql), progeny (nasl), and wealth (māl). These principles not only guide legal obligations but also inform broader societal goals such as justice, equality, and compassion (Tajmazinani & Mahdavi Mazinani, 2021). In recent years, however, it has become evident that integrating Tasawwuf (Islamic mysticism or Sufism) with Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah can provide a more holistic and comprehensive approach to social welfare, particularly in contemporary Muslim societies.

Tasawwuf, which emphasizes inner spiritual purification and the cultivation of values such as humility, compassion, and selflessness, has the potential to complement the legalistic and structural aspects of Islamic social welfare (Shuaib, 2023). While the legal framework of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah ensures justice and the equitable distribution of resources, Tasawwuf promotes the ethical and moral development of individuals, enhancing their social responsibility and empathy. This dual approach offers a more complete ethical foundation for social welfare, one that nurtures both the material and spiritual needs of individuals and communities.

The objective of this paper is to propose an ethical foundation for social welfare that integrates Tasawwuf with Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, addressing the need for a more balanced and inclusive approach to welfare in contemporary Muslim societies. The integration of these two elements offers a comprehensive framework that emphasizes not only economic justice but also spiritual and mental well-being, leading to a (Lobah, 2016).

2. Literature Review

Tasawwuf

Tasawwuf, or Sufism, is a significant branch of Islamic mysticism that emphasizes the purification of the soul and spiritual development. Central to Tasawwuf are three core ethical principles: Tawḥīd (Oneness of God), Ihsan (Excellence and Benevolence), and 'Adl (Justice), which play pivotal roles in shaping both personal ethics and social responsibility. Tawḥīd stresses the unity of God, encouraging believers to align their actions with divine will, promoting harmony both with the Creator and within the community (Abou-Bakr, 2023). Ihsan emphasizes the pursuit of moral excellence and benevolence in all aspects of life, urging individuals to perform actions with the highest standards of integrity, kindness, and compassion. These principles drive the cultivation of personal ethics by motivating individuals to act sincerely and with moral clarity (Kannike & Fahm, 2025).

Furthermore, 'Adl, or justice, serves as a cornerstone of Tasawwuf. It advocates for fairness and equity in personal behavior and social interactions, ensuring that individuals engage in just and responsible actions within their communities (Mubarok & Kurnia, 2025). The role of Tasawwuf in shaping personal ethics is closely tied to the pursuit of moral excellence. By focusing on Ihsan, Tasawwuf encourages individuals to refine their inner selves, fostering a deep sense of spiritual and ethical responsibility. This inner purification not only enhances personal conduct but also extends to social relationships, contributing to the overall welfare and cohesion of the community. Ultimately, Tasawwuf equips individuals to navigate their moral obligations, ensuring that their actions are beneficial to both themselves and society at large (Riwanto & Suryaningsih, 2022).

Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah

Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah refers to the objectives of Islamic law, which aim to safeguard key human interests such as religion (dīn), life (nafs), intellect ('aql), progeny (nasl), and wealth (māl) (Baba et al., 2025). These objectives serve to ensure that individuals and societies lead balanced, prosperous, and just lives. One of the primary functions of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah is to ensure economic justice. This is achieved through the equitable distribution of wealth, facilitated by practices such as Zakat (almsgiving) and the prohibition of Riba (usury). These principles work to address economic inequality and promote social welfare by ensuring fair redistribution of wealth (Riwanto & Suryaningsih, 2022). Additionally, the concept of qist (fairness) in Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah promotes social equity by advocating for fair treatment and the elimination of exploitation, particularly in financial transactions, thereby creating a system where all members of society are treated with dignity and respect (Abou-Bakr, 2023).

The integration of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah into modern governance frameworks further emphasizes the role of the state in ensuring the welfare of its citizens. This includes economic provisions such as welfare programs, as well as social services supporting public health, education, and security (Shuaib, 2023). The application of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah to contemporary social welfare systems promotes an inclusive, just, and sustainable society, aligning closely with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those focused on poverty alleviation, economic justice, and community empowerment (Mubarok & Kurnia, 2025).

Intersection of Tasawwuf and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah

The integration of Tasawwuf (Islamic mysticism) and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah (objectives of Islamic law) offers a unique perspective on the ethical foundations of social welfare in Islam. Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah primarily emphasizes the preservation of key human interests, such as religion (dīn), life (nafs), intellect ('aql), honor ('ird), and wealth (māl). These objectives promote human welfare and social justice, serving as a framework for addressing global humanitarian crises such as poverty, war, and displacement (Suliman, 2025). However, the integration of Tasawwuf, which focuses on inner purification and moral conduct, into the framework of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah has not been extensively explored in the existing literature. The spiritual dimensions of Tasawwuf—such as the cultivation of values like humility, empathy, and benevolence—align with the ethical underpinnings of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, which also seeks to promote social justice and the well-being of individuals and communities (Kismawadi et al., 2025).

Social Welfare in Islam

Islamic social welfare programs are rooted in the ethical principles of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah and the broader Islamic framework of justice and solidarity. The practice of Zakat (obligatory charity), Waqf (charitable endowments), and Qard Hasan (interest-free loans) are integral mechanisms designed to promote wealth redistribution, reduce socio-economic inequalities, and foster community welfare (Raimi et al., 2025). These financial instruments are deeply embedded in Islamic ethics, ensuring that wealth circulates within society to address the needs of the vulnerable.

However, Islamic Financial Institutions (IFIs) often face criticism for their limited integration of social welfare objectives. While IFIs are expected to align with Islamic ethical principles, including corporate social responsibility (CSR), many prioritize profit maximization and Shari'ah compliance, treating CSR as a peripheral activity rather than a central policy (Jafar & Zafar, 2025). This gap between theoretical expectations and practical implementation suggests a need for more robust frameworks that integrate the social and ethical goals of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah into Islamic financial practices.

3. Materials and Method

The proposed research will use a mixed-method approach, combining a literature-based review, case studies, and the development of a theoretical framework to integrate Tasawwuf (Islamic mysticism) with Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah (objectives of Islamic law) for a comprehensive model of social welfare. The literature review will explore key concepts of Tasawwuf, such as Ihsan (moral excellence), Tawhīd (Oneness of God), and 'Adl (justice), alongside the objectives of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah—which aims to preserve religion, life, intellect, progeny, and

wealth-focusing on their integration in fostering social welfare. Case studies will examine real-world applications, particularly in Islamic finance mechanisms like Zakat, Waqf, and Qard Hasan, highlighting the alignment of spiritual and legal principles in promoting social justice and community welfare. Finally, a theoretical framework will be developed to guide the integration of these spiritual and ethical principles into a holistic social welfare model, addressing both material and moral needs in Muslim societies, and serving as a guide for policymakers and practitioners.

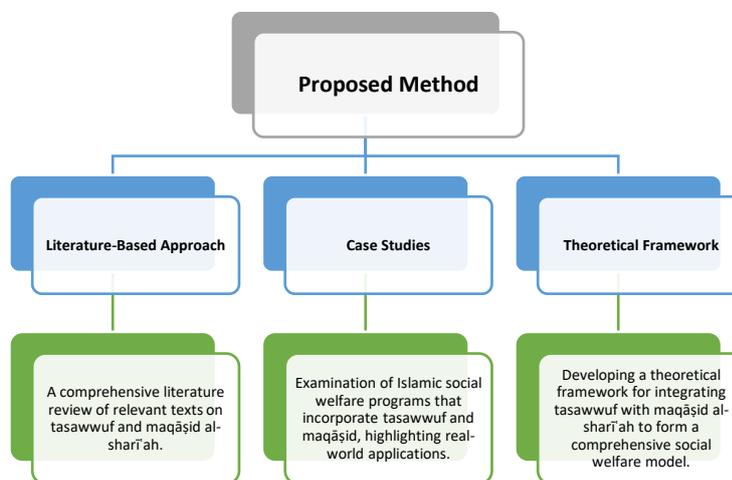


Figure 1. The structure of the Research Methodology flowchart.

Proposed Method

The proposed research method for integrating Tasawwuf (Islamic mysticism) with Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah (objectives of Islamic law) in the context of social welfare involves a literature-based approach, case studies, and the development of a theoretical framework. This mixed-method approach allows for a thorough examination of both theoretical and practical aspects of Islamic social welfare, focusing on the ethical, spiritual, and legal dimensions.

Literature-Based Approach

The first step of the research will involve a comprehensive literature review of relevant texts on Tasawwuf and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah. This approach will provide a foundation for understanding how these two concepts can be integrated to create a more holistic model for social welfare in contemporary Muslim societies. The literature review will draw from a range of academic sources, including books, journal articles, and scholarly papers that explore the spiritual and ethical dimensions of Tasawwuf and its relationship with the principles of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah. The review will also examine how these frameworks have been applied in social welfare programs, particularly focusing on Islamic finance mechanisms such as Zakat (obligatory charity), Waqf (charitable endowments), and Qard Hasan (interest-free loans), which aim to promote social justice and community welfare.

Case Studies

Following the literature review, the research will include case studies that examine real-world examples of Islamic social welfare programs that incorporate the principles of Tasawwuf and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah. These case studies will focus on programs that have successfully integrated spiritual and ethical practices with the objectives of Islamic law to promote social welfare. For instance, Islamic financial institutions (IIFs) that align their operations with Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah principles while also considering Tasawwuf's ethical teachings could provide valuable insights into the practical integration of these concepts. Additionally, the research will explore Takaful (Islamic insurance) and other Islamic financial mechanisms, analyzing how they have been employed to promote social justice, economic equity, and community welfare while integrating ethical principles from both Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah and Tasawwuf.

Theoretical Framework

The final component of the proposed method involves the development of a theoretical framework that integrates Tasawwuf with Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah to form a comprehensive social welfare model. This framework will be grounded in the ethical and spiritual principles of both concepts, ensuring that social welfare practices address not only the material needs of individuals but also their spiritual and moral development. The theoretical framework will incorporate key principles of Tasawwuf, such as Ihsan (excellence and benevolence), Tawḥīd (Oneness of God), and ‘Adl (justice), alongside the objectives of Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah, which include the preservation of religion, life, intellect, progeny, and wealth. The integration of these principles will provide a holistic framework for addressing both individual and community welfare, promoting social justice, economic equity, and ethical conduct in Muslim societies. This theoretical model will serve as a guideline for policymakers, practitioners, and academics seeking to create socially just and spiritually fulfilling welfare programs that align with Islamic teachings.

4. Results and Discussion

The integration of Tasawwuf and Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah creates a holistic approach to social welfare that addresses both material and spiritual needs. Tasawwuf promotes ethical principles such as Ihsan (excellence) and ‘Adl (justice), encouraging personal purification and moral conduct, which align with the social justice goals of Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah. This integration fosters a deeper sense of empathy, justice, and social responsibility, helping to address social inequalities and promote community welfare. Islamic financial mechanisms like Zakat, Waqf, and Qard Hasan, guided by these ethical principles, support poverty alleviation and economic justice, while Takaful (Islamic insurance) can enhance social solidarity and corporate social responsibility, creating a more compassionate and equitable society.

Results

The integration of Tasawwuf and Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah enhances the ethical foundation for social welfare by combining the spiritual and ethical teachings of Tasawwuf with the societal goals of Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah. This integration creates a more holistic approach to social welfare that not only addresses the material needs of individuals but also emphasizes their spiritual and ethical development. Tasawwuf, with its focus on inner purification and moral excellence, complements the objectives of Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah, which seeks to ensure the well-being and justice of individuals and society. By blending these two frameworks, individuals are guided to not only follow legal regulations but also to act with compassion, justice, and empathy in their social interactions, fostering a deeper sense of social responsibility.

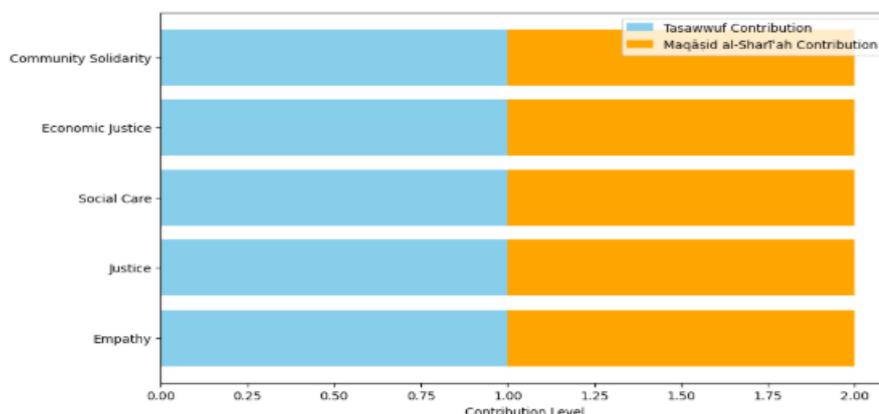


Figure 1. Contribution of Tasawwuf and Maqāṣid al-Shariah in Social Welfare.

I have provided a table and a bar graph that illustrate the contributions of Tasawwuf and Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah in various aspects of social welfare. The table summarizes the key aspects and the respective contributions from both frameworks, while the graph visually compares their contributions to each aspect of social welfare.

Moreover, the integration of Tasawwuf and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah has the potential to promote social cohesion and justice within Muslim communities. It encourages the application of Ihsan (excellence) and 'Adl (justice) in both personal and community actions, helping to address social inequalities and encourage empathy toward the vulnerable. This ethical alignment fosters a society where the spiritual development of individuals complements the pursuit of social justice, leading to a more just, equitable, and compassionate community.

Discussion

The integration of Tasawwuf with Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah offers a comprehensive approach to social welfare that can address both the material and spiritual needs of Muslim communities. Tasawwuf, with its emphasis on personal purification, encourages individuals to embody values such as empathy, selflessness, and moral excellence. These values are crucial for fostering strong ethical foundations in social welfare programs, ensuring that individuals not only comply with legal requirements but also act in accordance with higher ethical standards. This integration deepens the commitment to justice and empathy, particularly in community-based welfare programs that aim to uplift the vulnerable and marginalized members of society.

The integration also enhances the role of Islamic finance in promoting social welfare. Mechanisms such as Zakat (almsgiving), Waqf (charitable endowments), and Qard Hasan (interest-free loans) are grounded in Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah's goal of promoting equity and justice. By incorporating Tasawwuf's emphasis on moral conduct and compassion, these financial tools can be used more effectively to address socio-economic inequalities. The ethical principles derived from Tasawwuf ensure that these resources are used not only in compliance with Sharī'ah but also in ways that foster communal well-being and solidarity.

Additionally, the integration of Tasawwuf and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah helps build stronger social bonds and solidarity within Muslim communities. Takaful, the Islamic insurance system, is an example of how these principles can be applied practically. By incorporating higher ethical standards, Takaful providers can enhance their corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, addressing issues such as environmental sustainability and social equity. This integration ensures that Takaful not only serves as a financial tool but also contributes to the collective welfare, supporting social justice and community care in line with Islamic teachings.

5. Comparison

The integration of Tasawwuf and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah provides a holistic approach to social welfare, emphasizing both spiritual and ethical development alongside material support. Unlike traditional legalistic frameworks, which primarily focus on regulatory measures and compliance with legal standards, this integrated approach goes beyond mere legal obligation to foster deeper moral conduct and spiritual awareness. In traditional frameworks, social welfare programs may rely heavily on rules and regulations such as the fair distribution of wealth through mechanisms like Zakat and Waqf, but they often lack a comprehensive focus on the ethical and moral dimensions of these practices. In contrast, the holistic model presented here ensures that legal compliance is complemented by the cultivation of empathy, justice, and social care, which are deeply embedded in both Tasawwuf and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah. By addressing both the external legal requirements and internal ethical imperatives, this approach creates a more balanced and fulfilling social welfare system.

The strength of integrating Tasawwuf with Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah lies in its ability to foster a more compassionate, just, and spiritually enriching social welfare model. While Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah provides the ethical and legal foundation for preserving key human interests, Tasawwuf adds an essential dimension of spiritual development that is often overlooked in traditional legal frameworks. By prioritizing Ihsan (excellence) and 'Adl (justice), the integration emphasizes the importance of moral character and ethical behavior in fulfilling social welfare obligations. This approach encourages individuals to not only act in accordance with legal norms but also to act with compassion, kindness, and empathy, particularly toward the vulnerable in society. Moreover, the ethical teachings of Tasawwuf help prevent exploitation and ensure that welfare resources are distributed with a sense of personal responsibility, aligning with both individual spiritual growth and societal welfare. In comparison to traditional frameworks that might only ensure material support, this integrated

approach offers a fuller, more humane model for social welfare that nurtures both the body and soul.

6. Conclusion

The integration of Tasawwuf (Islamic mysticism) and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah (objectives of Islamic law) offers a robust and comprehensive ethical framework for social welfare. The findings from this study highlight the importance of combining the ethical teachings of Tasawwuf, such as Ihsan (excellence) and 'Adl (justice), with the goals of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, which aims to preserve key human interests such as religion, life, intellect, progeny, and wealth. This integration fosters a holistic approach to social welfare that not only addresses the material needs of individuals but also nurtures their spiritual and moral development. The ethical and spiritual principles derived from Tasawwuf enhance the implementation of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, ensuring that social welfare practices are not only legally compliant but also morally fulfilling and just. This integrated approach contributes to greater social justice, empathy, and cohesion within Muslim communities, addressing both individual and community welfare in a balanced and sustainable manner.

To build on the findings of this study, further research is needed to explore the practical implementation of this integrated approach in contemporary Muslim societies. Future studies should investigate how Tasawwuf can be systematically incorporated into existing Islamic social welfare programs, particularly in areas such as Islamic finance, Takaful, and Zakat. Additionally, research should focus on identifying real-world examples where Tasawwuf and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah have been successfully integrated to create more effective and ethical social welfare systems.

Policy recommendations for Islamic organizations and governments should include the development of frameworks that align Islamic social welfare practices with the ethical and spiritual dimensions of Tasawwuf. These policies should encourage the adoption of a more holistic approach that balances legal compliance with moral conduct and spiritual development. Furthermore, educational initiatives should be introduced to raise awareness about the benefits of integrating Tasawwuf and Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, fostering greater understanding and support for this approach within Muslim communities.

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