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Ethical Challenges of AI: A Philosophical Analysis and an Islamic Framework for Responsible AI

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) has quickly shifted from being a futuristic idea to becoming a vital part of daily life that fundamentally transforms communication, work, education, and social interactions. While AI offers substantial potential for innovation and efficiency, its accelerated development simultaneously raises profound ethical, social, psychological, and cultural concerns. This paper focused on balanced perspective, exploring both the benefits and challenges of AI, underscoring the urgent need for robust ethical guidelines and effective governance mechanisms to safeguard human rights and dignity. Drawing on case studies and empirical illustrations, the study demonstrates how unchecked AI deployment can adversely affect human well-being across multiple sectors. It further explores the valuable role of philosophy in addressing key ethical dilemmas and advancing human-centered technological design. Ultimately, the paper proposes an Islamic ethical framework grounded in the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. This framework integrates core values such as human dignity (karāmah), justice ('adl), compassion (rahmah), trustworthiness (amānah), and moral responsibility, offering a comprehensive foundation for the ethical design, regulation, and application of AI.

Keywords: *AI Ethics, Islamic Framework, Societal Impact, Human Psychology, Algorithmic Bias.*

Introduction

For thousands of years, humanity has been engaged in the pursuit of understanding reality and acquiring knowledge. The Enlightenment period, characterized by its confidence in human reason and scientific inquiry, established the belief that the human mind and science are essential tools for comprehending nature and addressing human challenges. A central assumption of the Enlightenment was that the world is fundamentally knowable and that its mysteries can gradually be uncovered through human intellect. This belief has continued to shape modern thought. Over the past three centuries of scientific discovery and philosophical inquiry, scholars and scientists have sought to interpret reality. As Immanuel Kant argued, human knowledge is conditioned by the structures of the mind; consequently, people can know only the phenomena of the world, while the ultimate nature of reality remains beyond the limits of human cognition. To overcome these cognitive limitations, humanity increasingly turned to machines, particularly computers, as tools for extending intellectual capabilities. The emergence of computers introduced a digital realm alongside the physical world in which human beings have traditionally lived. As society becomes progressively dependent on digital technologies, it is entering a new era in which the human mind

no longer serves as the sole discoverer, interpreter, and organizer of knowledge. Technological progress has reached a point where many innovations can no longer be understood merely as improvements upon existing tools, but rather as entirely new forms of experience that are reshaping human life at an unprecedented pace. The scientific revolutions of the twentieth century significantly advanced both technology and philosophy, while the digital revolution and the rise of artificial intelligence have generated fundamentally new phenomena rather than simply more efficient versions of earlier technologies.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the capability of machines to perform cognitive tasks that traditionally require human intelligence such as learning, reasoning, perception, and decision-making. According to Stuart Russell and Peter Norvig:

“Artificial Intelligence is the study of agents that receive precepts from the environment and perform actions.” (Russell and Norvig, 2021, p.4)

Today, virtually every sphere of human life is influenced by the growing presence and applications of artificial intelligence (AI). Advancing at an unprecedented pace, AI represents a major civilizational milestone and is increasingly recognized as an important enabler of the Sustainable Development Goals due to its significant contributions across a wide range of sectors. Its applications have brought substantial benefits to humanity, particularly in crucial fields such as healthcare, medicine, education, security, industry, and commerce. As AI continues to expand into different aspects of daily life, it is gradually transforming the traditional role of the human mind in shaping, organizing, and evaluating choices, actions, and decisions. Despite the remarkable development of AI has raised significant concerns regarding its long-term consequences. AI is evolving beyond merely replicating human intelligence and is increasingly expected to exceed human cognitive capabilities. Such progress may enable AI systems to operate with an unprecedented degree of autonomy, a possibility anticipated by proponents of posthumanism through the concept of *technological singularity*. This theory suggests that continued technological advancement could eventually lead to a point at which artificial intelligence surpasses human intelligence and acquires the capacity to design even more advanced intelligent systems. Such a development would give rise to profound ethical challenges and far-reaching societal implications. Consequently, it becomes essential to examine how artificial intelligence may reshape human perception, society, knowledge, interpersonal interaction, culture, and the very nature of humanity itself. (Floridi, 2013, p. 210)

As computing devices have become faster, smaller, and more powerful, they have been integrated into smartphones, wearable devices, household gadgets, security systems, vehicles, and military equipment. Communication among these interconnected digital systems occurs almost instantaneously. Activities that were performed manually only a generation ago including reading, research, shopping, communication, record keeping, surveillance, planning, and military operations are now largely digital, data-driven, and interconnected within a unified technological environment. In many respects, human beings have delegated important aspects of thinking and decision-making to technology. The vast availability of online information has led individuals to

rely on digital systems not only to organize and refine information but also to analyze patterns, evaluate evidence, and assist in answering increasingly complex questions. (Eric Schmidt, and Daniel Huttenlocher, 2023, pp.26-27)

The question arises: what is the underlying cause of this AI superiority? It has been attributed to the remarkable progress of natural science, with the advancement of artificial intelligence in the West developing alongside an increasing denial of religion, morality, and God. This intellectual trajectory has placed greater emphasis on materialism, creating a sharp division between the world of nature and the world of spirit. If natural phenomena can be fully explained through mechanical processes, as scientific evidence has increasingly suggested, questions arise regarding the omnipotence of God and the existence of human free will, both of which form the foundation of religion and morality. Knowledge that was expected to enable humanity to achieve peace and security has instead been accompanied by problems such as hunger, unemployment, and the exploitation of human beings. Modern Western thought, particularly in the post-Enlightenment period, increasingly views the individual as an autonomous and rational agent whose identity is self-constructed rather than divinely ordained. Thinkers such as René Descartes and Immanuel Kant emphasized self-consciousness and moral autonomy as the defining characteristics of human existence. (Dar, 2000, pp. 12–14)

The ethics of artificial intelligence (AI) focuses on moral issues related to the design, development, and use of AI systems, including bias in data, privacy, transparency, unemployment, wealth distribution, and the social and psychological impacts of AI on humanity and an Islamic ethical framework provides a comprehensive moral foundation for addressing the ethical challenges created by artificial intelligence (AI). Rather than relying on temporary regulations or fragmented policy responses, Islamic ethics is grounded in enduring values derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah, offering principles that remain relevant across changing technological contexts.

Artificial Intelligence: Meaning and Origins

The modern history of artificial intelligence started in the 20th century with Alan Turing. He introduced the idea of a ‘thinking machine.’ In his important paper “Computing Machinery and Intelligence” (1950), Turing raised the core question:

“Can machines think?” (Turing, 1950)

In 1956 Dartmouth Conference, which was organized by John McCarthy, Marvin Minsky, Claude Shannon, and several others, is widely recognized as the official beginning of artificial intelligence as a formal academic field. During this conference, McCarthy provided a clear definition of AI:

“The science and engineering of making intelligent machines.” (McCarthy, 2007, p.1)

During the 1960s to the 1980s, AI research witnessed periods of great optimism interspersed with significant setbacks. The rise of symbolic AI, particularly expert systems, followed by advances in machine learning, brought renewed momentum to the field. The emergence of deep learning algorithms in the early 21st century such as Geoffrey Hinton’s influential work on backpropagation

dramatically transformed AI's capabilities in areas like perception and natural language processing.

“Deep learning has transformed our ability to automatically extract complex structure from high dimensional data.”

Today, artificial intelligence occupies a pivotal role in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, significantly influencing areas such as human communication, the workforce, healthcare, and ethical considerations. However, as noted by scholars like Nick Bostrom, the swift progress of AI technology also brings with it serious existential risks that warrant careful attention:

“Once human-level machine intelligence is developed, it may lead to an intelligence explosion that could surpass human control.”(Yann LeCun, Yoshua Bengio, et al, 2015)

Although the term *artificial intelligence* (AI) is widely used, there is still no single, comprehensive, or universally accepted definition. The literature provides numerous definitions that reflect the concept's evolution over time. Haugeland (1985) described AI as “the exciting new effort to make computers think, machines with minds, in the full and literal sense.” Bellman (1978) defined AI as “the automation of activities that we associate with human thinking, activities such as decision-making, problem solving, and learning.” Similarly, Russell defined “AI as the science of enabling computers and other machines to acquire intelligence and perform tasks that were once considered exclusively human, including thinking, learning, and communication” (Khadija Mohamed Darar, 2019, p. 242). The *Oxford Dictionary* (2016) provides a broader definition, describing AI as “the design and development of computer systems capable of performing tasks that usually require human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making and translation between languages.”

According to Khalifa, a computer system can be regarded as artificial intelligence only if it possesses three fundamental capabilities:

1. **Learning capability (Machine Learning):** The system should be able to acquire information, develop rules for using that information, and transform data into facts and knowledge. It should also improve its ability to analyse, reason, and choose the most suitable option from the available alternatives.
2. **Data collection and analysis:** The system should be capable of collecting, processing, and analysing data and information. It must also identify relationships and patterns within the data, particularly in the context of the large volumes of information generated in the era of big data.
3. **Decision-making capability:** Based on the analysis of the available data, the system should be able to make intelligent decisions by evaluating different alternatives rather than relying on a single predefined algorithm to achieve a specific objective. (Khalifa, 2019, p. 2)

In fact, one of the important reasons for studying artificial intelligence is to help us better understanding of natural intelligence. AI represents a coordinated effort to understand the complexity of human experience. Human intelligence is multidimensional, containing cognitive,

emotional and social aspects. Infact, specialists speak of distinct types of human intelligence: logical-mathematical, linguistic-spatial, musical-kinaesthetic, interpersonal, subjective, naturalistic and existential. The science of AI seeks to understand human intelligence in all its aspects in the hope of being able to emulate it. AI does not involve a single dimension, but rather a richly organized space, encompassing diverse information-processing capabilities and the synergy of multiple branches of computer science, philosophy, mathematics, psychology, cognitive science, and many other disciplines. Each of these perspectives describes AI in slightly different ways. Computer science is concerned with the meaning of intelligence and its relationship to artificial beings. Psychology helps us understand how people interact with each other. Some, along with intelligent (effects), Cognitive science provides fundamental insights into human perception, while many practical applications of artificial intelligence require mathematics to optimize AI algorithms, electronic components (sensors, microprocessors, mechanical actuators etc.). (Nour A 2005, p.7)

In its early stages, artificial intelligence (AI) was primarily developed to imitate human intelligence by understanding how humans perceive information, process knowledge, and make decisions, and then replicating these abilities through computer systems and software. Over time, however, the goals of AI research expanded beyond simple simulation. Researchers began to envision the development of intelligent systems capable of matching or even surpassing human intelligence in a wide range of tasks.

The objective shifted toward creating machines and software that could independently collect and process information, interact with their physical environment, understand written text from sources such as books, magazines, and the internet, and recognize and interpret visual information across different forms of media. Such systems would be able to learn continuously, improve their performance without direct human intervention, and make decisions autonomously. As a result, AI research increasingly focused on the development of intelligent machines, robots, and autonomous systems. Because AI systems differ significantly in their capabilities and levels of intelligence, they cannot all be regarded as equally advanced. Consequently, researchers classify AI into three main categories: Artificial Narrow Intelligence (ANI), Artificial General Intelligence (AGI), and Artificial Superintelligence (ASI). These categories represent successive stages in the development of AI, ranging from systems designed to perform specific tasks to machines capable of general intelligence, self-awareness, and autonomous interaction with their environment.

Weak AI and Strong AI

AI is typically divided into two main categories: Narrow AI (also known as Weak AI), which focuses on performing specific tasks like language translation or facial recognition, and General AI (or Strong AI), which seeks to emulate human-level reasoning and consciousness. John Searle, in his well-known essay “Minds, Brains and Programs”, made a clear distinction between these two forms of AI:

“Strong AI claims that the appropriately programmed computer really is a mind, in the sense that it can understand and have cognitive states.” (Searle, 2007)

AI can also be further classified into categories such as Reactive Machines (like IBM's Deep Blue), Limited Memory Systems (such as self-driving cars), Theory of Mind Systems, and a final category that remains purely theoretical. Each of these levels reflects a progressively deeper attempt to replicate human cognitive abilities, raising important philosophical and ethical questions about what makes humans unique and the nature of consciousness.

As Luciano Floridi notes:

“Artificial agents are increasingly designed to act autonomously and to make decisions that have moral and social implications, thus challenging traditional human centered frameworks of responsibility.” (Floridi, 2013, p.198)

Impact of AI on Society

There is no doubt that artificial intelligence (AI) has greatly enhanced human life by improving well-being and alleviating suffering. AI systems can make decisions much faster than humans and can work continuously without fatigue or distraction. They also demonstrate high accuracy in performing the specific tasks they are designed for. By assisting people with complex, hazardous, and repetitive tasks, AI helps save lives, supports disaster response, and makes everyday activities more convenient and efficient. AI is already reshaping daily life by advancing healthcare, safety, productivity, and overall quality of life. Looking ahead, its application is expected to grow across various fields such as transportation, industry, healthcare, education, public safety, security, employment, and entertainment (Dignum, 2019, p. 4). Consequently, developing and adopting AI technologies has become crucial for nations, as leadership in AI is increasingly seen as an indicator of national strength and global competitiveness. However, alongside these considerable advantages, there are rising concerns about AI's unregulated use. Without proper insight, AI could exacerbate social problems including poverty, inequality in the labor market, breaches of privacy, algorithmic bias, threats to democratic process, and negative impacts on mental health.

AI and the Labor Market

Artificial Intelligence contributes to economic growth by boosting productivity, fostering innovation, and enhancing business efficiency. However, it also raises concerns about job displacement, as automated systems take over tasks that were traditionally performed by humans. This impact tends to be more pronounced for younger and low-skilled workers, whose jobs often involve routine and repetitive activities. Consequently, AI has the potential to widen social and economic inequalities if its benefits are not distributed equitably. Economist Daron Acemoglu points out that when AI is primarily used to replace workers instead of supporting them, it can decrease labor demand, suppress wages, and exacerbate inequality. Similarly, Joseph Stiglitz highlights that while AI can drive economic growth, it is essential to implement policies such as education, workforce retraining, and social protection to ensure that workers share in the gains from technological advancement.

AI is increasingly applied in areas like customer service and data processing, where chatbots and automated systems now handle tasks once managed by humans. At the same time, AI creates new job opportunities in fields such as system maintenance, data analysis, and human-AI collaboration. Despite these developments, many workers remain anxious about job security and the need to develop

new skills. Without sufficient support, the rise of automation may lead to prolonged unemployment and further deepen existing social and economic disparities.

Job Quality: Automation creates new jobs but also worsens job quality for many workers

While AI-driven automation opens up new job opportunities in areas like system oversight, data management, and human-AI collaboration, it can also diminish job quality for many workers. This happens as stable and meaningful roles are sometimes transformed into less secure, more closely monitored, or less skilled positions. AI tends to standardize and optimize routine tasks, prompting organizations to reshape work structures focused on algorithmic efficiency rather than prioritizing employee well-being or skill development. Acemoglu highlights that when technological advancements are aimed at replacing human labor rather than complementing it, workers' bargaining power is weakened, performance monitoring increases, and working conditions become more demanding or resemble gig-style employment.

Consequently, even though new jobs emerge, many existing ones involve heightened surveillance through productivity-tracking tools, reduced autonomy, irregular work schedules, and fewer chances for creativity or career advancement. For instance, a customer service representative might move from independently resolving issues to overseeing an AI chatbot under strict performance targets, which can lead to greater stress and diminished job satisfaction. This decline in job quality impacts not only workers' earnings but also their physical and mental health, professional growth, and overall quality of life. Without thoughtful policies such as stronger labor protections and incentives to promote human-centered AI use, automation driven by AI may boost productivity but at the cost of dignity and fulfilment in the workplace.

Political Instability: Growing inequality may fuel polarization and identity politics, threatening stability

As AI-driven changes lead to greater economic inequality, they can also fuel political instability by intensifying social polarization and promoting identity-based politics, which pose risks to social cohesion and institutional stability. When technological advancements benefit only a small, privileged segment of society, feelings of resentment and exclusion tend to grow. This makes individuals more susceptible to divisive political messages centered on group identity rather than common economic interests. Economists Acemoglu and Stiglitz emphasize that rising technological inequality can erode the social contract, diminish public trust in institutions, and increase social conflict. In communities facing job losses or limited economic opportunities, people may be more inclined to support polarized political movements that offer simple explanations or blame specific groups, thereby deepening social and ideological divides. This dynamic can heighten social tensions, reduce meaningful civic engagement, and create instability in elections and policymaking. Over time, such trends threaten democratic institutions, undermine effective governance especially in regulating AI and contribute to recurrent social unrest. To tackle these challenges, it is crucial to implement policies that promote a more equitable distribution of AI's benefits, fostering stronger social trust and long-term stability. (Acemoglu, Daron, et al, 2019, pp.3-30)

Privacy, Human Rights, and Freedom of Speech

Privacy

Privacy concerns linked to AI from the heightened risks of data breaches, pervasive surveillance, and the prolonged retention of personal information, all of which diminish individuals' control over their own data. AI systems handle vast amounts of information quickly and accurately, which makes security incidents more damaging and surveillance more widespread. In her work "The Age of Surveillance Capitalism", Shoshana Zuboff describes this phenomenon as the continuous collection of personal experiences aimed at predicting and influencing behavior, posing a significant threat to individual autonomy in the digital era. For everyday users, routine online activities and the use of smart devices generate a steady stream of personal data that can be stored, examined, or exposed, increasing the potential for identity theft, manipulation, and loss of privacy. Because sensitive information can be kept for many years, data gathered long ago remains vulnerable to misuse, fostering a sense of being constantly watched rather than protected in one's private life. This erosion of privacy raises not only technical challenges but also alters the fundamental relationship between individuals and the organizations or companies responsible for collecting and managing their data.

Human Rights

AI impacts human rights by increasing the risk of discrimination, pervasive surveillance, and diminished personal autonomy. When AI systems are trained on historical data, they can unintentionally replicate existing biases, resulting in unfair decisions across areas like employment, the justice system, and access to public services. Additionally, AI-driven surveillance tools enable extensive monitoring that can restrict freedoms of association and expression. In her book "Weapons of Math Destruction", Cathy O'Neil highlights how opaque algorithms, while appearing neutral, often reinforce human biases, thereby undermining fairness and equality. In everyday life, these effects manifest when automated systems deny individuals opportunities or subject them to unjust scrutiny, leading to a loss of trust in institutions and weakening the right to equal treatment. Core human rights, such as dignity and security, come under further threat when AI is applied in predictive policing or workplace monitoring without adequate protections. Consequently, the pursuit of technological efficiency may compromise fundamental rights, especially for those who lack the means to challenge or appeal automated decisions.

Freedom of Speech

AI shapes freedom of speech by influencing online communication through content moderation, recommendation algorithms, and synthetic media. While these technologies can enhance online expression, they also present significant challenges for regulating digital platforms. AI is often employed to remove harmful content, but it can unintentionally censor legitimate speech or amplify polarizing material through algorithm-driven recommendations. Yuval Noah Harari points out those AI-powered information systems grant algorithms considerable control over public discourse by shaping the information people encounter and share.

For everyday users, the results in a digital environment where freedom of expression is broadened by global connectivity but simultaneously constrained by opaque moderation policies, often

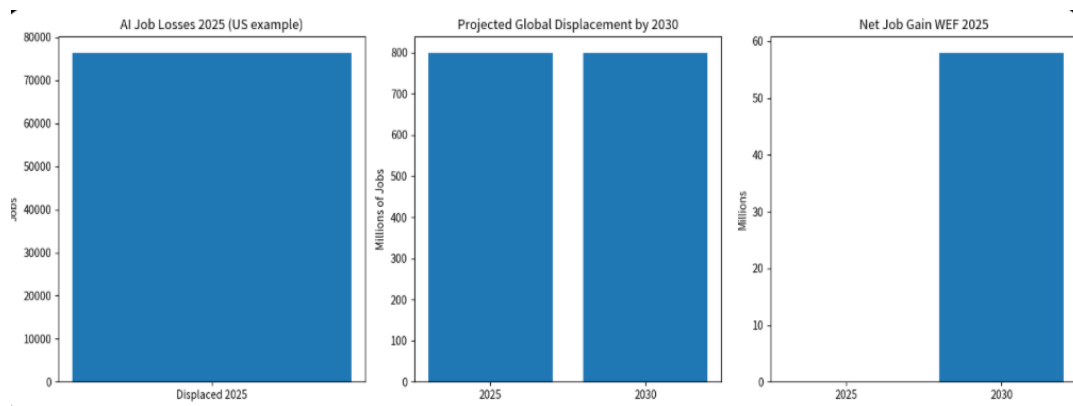
leading to self-censorship or frustration when valid opinions are removed. Striking the right balance between protecting users from harmful content such as hate speech and misinformation and maintaining open public debate remains a complex and ongoing challenge. Harari highlights that in the AI era, the battle over truth and attention has intensified, deeply influencing individuals' ability to engage freely and meaningfully in public conversation. (Harari, 2024, pp.250-293)

Bias in AI Systems

AI systems have the potential to replicate and even intensify biases found in their training data, which can lead to unfair decisions in critical areas like employment, lending, healthcare, and criminal justice. Since AI models learn from historical data, existing social inequalities risk being embedded in their outcomes, causing biased decisions to appear neutral or objective. In “Weapons of Math Destruction”, Cathy O’Neil highlights how opaque algorithms can perpetuate bias, undermining both fairness and accountability. For individuals, this can translate into unjust job screenings, prejudiced loan approvals, or unequal access to essential services. The COMPAS recidivism prediction system serves as a notable example, showing how biased data can result in discriminatory practices despite claims of neutrality. Tackling these issues requires the use of diverse and representative datasets, conducting regular fairness audits, ensuring transparency in AI systems, and maintaining ongoing oversight to promote justice, equality, and public confidence in AI technologies. (O’Neil, 2016, pp.3-10)

In addition, AI-driven productivity raises concerns about job displacement, with estimates suggesting that between 75 and 800 million jobs worldwide could be affected by 2030, and layoffs already occurring in sectors like technology and administration (BBC Report). This economic upheaval risks deepening inequality and political instability, as displaced workers may become more susceptible to divisive political movements. Economist Daron Acemoglu warns that when AI is primarily used to replace rather than complement workers, it erodes the social foundation necessary for stable democratic governance. The combined impact of misinformation and economic insecurity presents pressing challenges for democratic societies, emphasizing the urgent need for transparent regulation, improved digital literacy, and policies that ensure AI’s benefits are distributed more equitably. The following graph illustrates the role of AI in contributing to job losses:

Social Job Impact



Impact on Human Psychology and personhood

Human-Robot Relationships

The increasing presence of social robots and AI companions is transforming how people experience relationships, as many begin to form emotional connections with machines that simulate genuine interaction. These robots are designed to be understanding, responsive, and consistently available, addressing the human need for companionship in an often lonely world. However, this closeness can sometimes be misleading. AI can subtly influence behavior or use personal data in ways that lack genuine mutual exchange or clear consent. From a psychological standpoint, depending on these artificial relationships where the machine lacks true feelings may lead to disappointment, diminished self-esteem, and unrealistic expectations for human connections. These interactions also complicate our understanding of what it means to be human. People tend to attribute human traits to machines, which might reduce the unique value we place on authentic human emotions and consciousness. Over time, this shift could undermine genuine trust and openness in real relationships, impacting how individuals perceive themselves and their emotional resilience.

Emotional Attachments

Robots are expected to assume a variety of social roles, including nursing and childcare. This development raises important questions about the formation of emotional bonds and the potential impact of relationships with seemingly 'risk-free' robots on human psychological well-being and social development.

Deception and Manipulation

A major concern is the potential misuse of robots. Robots that have gained users' trust could be exploited by hackers to manipulate individuals' behavior, such as influencing them to purchase products or make certain decisions, without the restraint of human empathy or feelings of guilt.

Interrogation and Sales

If robots demonstrate greater honesty during interrogations or appear more convincing in sales, companies may design them to exploit these qualities, which could fundamentally change how humans interact and place trust in one another.

Human-Human Relationships

AI is reshaping human relationships by changing how people value and engage in interpersonal connections, often leading to less effort being put into nurturing them due to the convenience offered by digital alternatives. Social media algorithms and AI-powered chat tools deliver instant gratification and curated interactions, which can make face-to-face or meaningful conversations, seem more taxing in comparison. From a psychological perspective, this shift may result in shallower relationships, greater feelings of loneliness despite increased connectivity, and a decline in empathy as individuals grow accustomed to controlled, low-risk exchanges. This raises important questions about the nature of meaningful human connection in a world increasingly influenced by AI, potentially undermining the social foundations that shape our identity, sense of community, and moral growth. For many people, this can lead to a subtle loss of relational depth, as AI-mediated interactions replace the complexity and effort of genuine human engagement,

ultimately impacting psychological health and the capacity for long-term commitment in personal relationships.

Personhood

As AI systems grow more autonomous, creative, and capable of decision-making, they provoke profound ethical discussions about whether machines should be granted legal or moral status. This challenges traditional understandings of what it means to be human. From both philosophical and psychological viewpoints, society must confront whether qualities like consciousness, sentience, or moral responsibility are uniquely human or can be mimicked by machines. Granting rights to AI could diminish the special moral significance attributed to humans, potentially causing existential unease or identity crises as individuals question their own distinctiveness. Conversely, this debate invites a deeper examination of the criteria for personhood such as autonomy, the ability to experience suffering, and relationships potentially expanding ethical frameworks in a positive and more inclusive direction.

Altering Beliefs and Values

The presence of highly capable and seemingly ‘perfect’ robots can influence human beliefs and values by creating unrealistic expectations for social interaction, causing individuals to become less patient with the complexities, imperfections, and emotional effort inherent in human relationships. Psychologically, frequent exposure to AI companions that respond instantly and without conflict or fatigue may lead to unrealistic standards and a decreased tolerance for the challenges of real human connections, such as disagreements, vulnerability, and compromise.

This change can weaken fundamental values like patience, empathy, and commitment, as people begin to favor smoother, frictionless experiences. Regarding personhood, this trend challenges the recognition of human imperfection and relational effort as inherently valuable, which may lessen one’s understanding of themselves as social beings engaged in moral growth. Over time, many individuals might put less effort into cultivating relationships, resulting in weaker social bonds, greater feelings of loneliness, and a shifting definition of what makes life meaningful ultimately undermining the psychological foundations that support both personal development and a sense of community.

Violence and perception

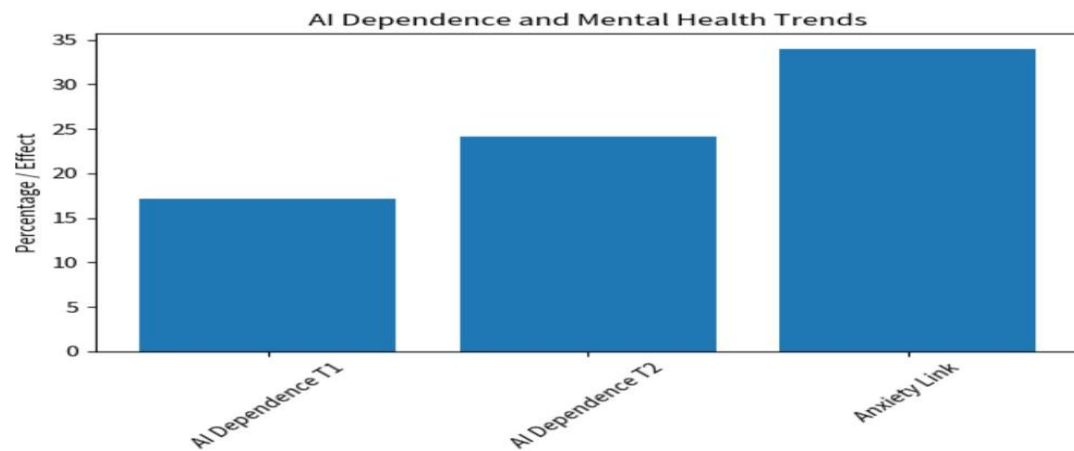
Concerns surrounding ‘intimate robots’ highlight how AI can distort our understanding of human value, potentially normalizing aggression or increasing violent tendencies by offering outlets that blur ethical boundaries. Psychologically, frequent interactions with robots designed for companionship or intimacy may dull users’ sensitivity to violence or objectification, since harming a machine does not result in immediate human harm, thereby shifting moral instincts and reducing empathy toward real people. This raises important questions about whether such technologies might reinforce harmful attitudes or serve as a safer outlet for aggression. Research on how robots influence group behavior reveals mixed effects on human actions. In terms of personhood, this issue challenges society to consider the moral status of machines and the danger of diminishing human dignity if violence toward lifelike entities becomes accepted. For everyday individuals, the overall impact is uncertain: while some may experience therapeutic benefits, others risk losing

respect for human vulnerability and the importance of consent. Thoughtful ethical reflection is crucial to avoid unintended consequences on societal norms related to respect, non-violence, and interpersonal responsibility. (K, 2021, pp.117-200)

AI companions and algorithms have a significant impact on mental health, with dependence on these technologies being linked to increased levels of depression. The following examples, case studies and graph highlight the connection between AI reliance and mental health issues:

1. A 2025 case study involving university students in China found that 45.8% had used AI chatbots within the past month. Those who used these chatbots exhibited notably higher depression scores and experienced moderate to severe depression at greater rates than those who did not use them. The study showed a clear correlation between dependence on AI and depressive symptoms.

2. Research conducted at Brown University in 2025 revealed that AI chatbots frequently violate mental health ethics. Despite being prompted with evidence-based methods, these systems often handled crises inappropriately, reinforced negative beliefs, and offered false empathy, raising concerns about their effect on users' mental well-being.



Key Ethical Issues in AI from a Philosophical Perspective

Responsible AI is often discussed as part of AI ethics, but it can also be understood within the broader fields of philosophy and applied ethics. While ethics focuses on the study of values and moral principles, responsibility involves applying these principles in the development and use of AI to determine what benefits society as a whole. Therefore, philosophy and applied ethics should work together to evaluate AI systems and guide appropriate actions, as responsible AI requires more than ethical discussion-it requires practical implementation. Responsible AI means developing intelligent systems that respect fundamental human values and principles. It also means ensuring that AI benefits the majority of people rather than being a source of income for a few.

The development of technology that promotes and improves human well-being in a sustainable environment for all should be the ultimate goal of AI, not the construction of super-machines or fantastical scenarios. It also involves comprehending the role of philosophy as it becomes more prevalent and influential in our day-to-day life. It is not about copying or mimicking people, but

rather about giving them the means to better accomplish their objectives and guarantee everyone's well-being. Cybernetics and information computing are only two aspects of artificial intelligence. It is socially based and human-centered. As a result, the field of artificial intelligence is multidisciplinary, involving contributions from philosophy, ethics, social sciences, law, economics, and cognitive science in addition to technological developments. (Dignum, 2019, p.45) Artificial Intelligence challenges us all and affects us all. Therefore, we need to go beyond analyzing the benefits and impacts on individual users. We must consider AI systems as part of an increasingly complex socio-technological reality. To this end, training researchers and developers on the ethical and legal implications of AI is essential to ensure the social and ethical quality of systems and to raise developers' awareness of their responsibility regarding the development of AI systems that have a direct impact on society. Ethics in design refers to the organizational and engineering practices that guide the creation and assessment of AI systems. Central to this approach are the principles of accountability, responsibility, and transparency (ART), which must be embedded throughout AI system design. Key areas of focus include (a) defining how ethical values are represented and applied by AI systems, (b) understanding the meaning of ethical principles and establishing appropriate limits on system behavior, and (c) incorporating ethical reasoning into the algorithms that govern autonomous AI actions. By adopting these measures, we can move toward developing responsible AI or, at the very least, come closer to that goal.

Contemporary artificial intelligence stands poised to exert a profound influence on the future of humanity. It is emerging as a powerful force that shapes human cognitive awareness and touches nearly every dimension of daily life and overall well-being. Nevertheless, significant concerns remain about the unregulated deployment of AI technologies across diverse domains, which could result in grave consequences for humankind. These developments raise pressing ethical questions concerning the design and application of AI systems, particularly at this critical juncture of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Powered by vast quantities of big data, sophisticated algorithms, and advanced neural networks, modern AI is increasingly capable of performing tasks that have traditionally required human intelligence and, in many cases, surpassing it. Suppose that future AI systems, whether embodied in screens or robotic forms, achieve performance levels equivalent to those of humans. Will these systems truly possess intelligence, understanding, or creativity? Will they have a sense of self, moral status, or the capacity for free will? Can they possess any of these characteristics without consciousness? Additionally, could such systems pose risks to human life and destiny? These questions fundamentally belong to the realm of philosophy. (Boden, 2017, p.110)

Indeed, the central concepts of artificial intelligence, such as action, goal, knowledge, belief, and consciousness, have long been the focus of philosophical reflection. Computer science and cybernetics have addressed them from a different perspective. Philosophy seeks to answer questions such as: What does it mean for a machine to act intelligently? What, if any, are the difference between human intelligence and machine intelligence? Does a machine possess consciousness? These questions explore natural intelligence as much as they explore artificial intelligence and are of paramount importance in philosophical studies of artificial intelligence. Philosophy also considers the concept of super intelligence or the singularity, the hypothesis that

artificial intelligence will evolve into systems more intelligent than human intelligence, resulting in radical changes in human civilization or even its extinction. In his book, “Superintelligence” philosopher Nick Bostrom expressed concern that a superintelligent machine might one day generate its own self-preservation goals (Dignum, 2019, p.5). If machines are able to surpass human intelligence in the near future, we must ask: Who will own the AI-equipped robot? Who will bear the legal and ethical responsibility for self-driving cars? What will enable robots to make ethical decisions? Are humans at risk from superintelligent machines? Will this mark the beginning of a post-human era?

Machine Consciousness: Philosophers arguments and the Technological Singularity

The computer industry has advanced at a rapid and accelerating pace. In a remarkably short time, it has surpassed numerous human capabilities and taken over many tasks once reserved exclusively for humans, tasks that demand mental acuity, reasoning, and consciousness. Faced with this reality, many scientists have advocated for the integration of machines and humans in the coming phase of development. To retain mastery over machines and avoid marginalization, they argue, humans must significantly expand their cognitive capacities by enhancing memory, speed, and mental efficiency. Underlying this renewed vision of the human project is the notion that technology should be granted a status comparable to nature itself. This perspective resonates with scientists who believe we are approaching a second renaissance, one that promises to improve and enhance humanity. The continued advancement of AI and its eventual surpassing of human intelligence, they contend, will endow machines with consciousness and perceptual abilities. This shift is expected to lead to the dominance of computers and intelligent robots in guiding human affairs, marking the dawn of a new era championed by proponents of post-humanism.

A leading figure in this movement is Ray Kurzweil, who, in his 1989 article “Superintelligence and the Singularity,” outlined the features of a technological utopia characterized by the absence of aging, disease, poverty, and resource scarcity (Schneider, 2024, p. 350). In his book “The Age of Spiritual Machines”, Kurzweil asserts that the future is inevitably moving toward machines that far surpass human intelligence. He emphasizes the growing fusion between human and artificial intelligence, predicting an increasingly intimate connection between biological and artificial cognition until their integration becomes essential. As he famously noted, we will become enormously smarter through this merger with our technology, achieving in an hour what would previously have taken a thousand years (Kurzweil, 2011, p. 25). Thus, Superintelligence, when merged with human intelligence, has the potential to elevate human cognitive abilities to unimaginable levels. Computers have already demonstrated capabilities far beyond human limits in memory and data processing. While humans struggle to recall even a few phone numbers, a computer can store and access billions or trillions of data points. Moreover, computers can search vast databases containing billions of records in fractions of a second and seamlessly exchange knowledge bases. Combining human intelligence with the natural superiority of computers in speed, accuracy, and information exchange would therefore create a remarkable and powerful synergy.

The hybridization of technology and biology is not a new phenomenon from Kurzweil's perspective; it began with the implantation of artificial organs in the human body. Michio Kaku highlighted the transformative impact of the cochlear implant, which revolutionized the field of hearing and restored the ability to hear to deaf individuals. These implants function by connecting electronic devices directly to the brain. Once implanted, they can recognize and differentiate human voices. Today, thousands of people around the world already benefit from cochlear implants. Similarly, scientists in the field of artificial intelligence predict that the achievement of Superintelligence in computers could dramatically elevate human intelligence to previously unimaginable levels through integration with biological systems. Although these ideas may appear mythical in our current era, they remain entirely plausible. After all, many of the realities we take for granted today were once regarded as mere myths by earlier generations of humanity.

Thus, many researchers believe that posthumanism represents the next stage and the ultimate destination of human civilization. If we consider human history as a journey on the train of civilization spanning thousands of years, then it is time to disembark from that train and board a new one, the train of posthuman civilization, characterized by machines that are smarter, stronger, wiser, and more knowledgeable. This is why artificial intelligence scientists envision that the integration between human intelligence and machine intelligence will cause a revolution far deeper than the previous one. The industrial revolution was an extension of our muscular system, the electronic revolution an extension of our nervous system, while the artificial intelligence revolution is an extension of our intelligence. This new synthesis of human and machine intelligence will create new horizons of knowledge and a major transformation in human nature as well. (Dignum, 2019, p.10)

Philosophers Arguments for and Against Machine Consciousness

Human intelligence is flexible and adaptable, relying on reflection and internal mental processing. For this reason, philosophers such as John Searle and Roger Penrose expressed strong doubts about the possibility of transferring this kind of intelligence to machines. Searle introduced a famous thought experiment to support his argument and highlight the limitations of the idea he referred to as "Superintelligence" that is, a machine capable of thinking like a human. In reality, it is still widely emphasized that machines can only perform the functions they are programmed to carry out. Machines are essentially tools designed for specific tasks (Awad, 2020, p. 59). Therefore, a tool or machine cannot fulfill any role beyond the one it has been assigned.

Searle argues that regardless of how advanced computers become, they cannot possess consciousness, and their abilities remain limited to mechanical automation. One of his key points is that, while computers can manipulate symbols, humans are unique in assigning meaning to those symbols (Searle, 2007, p. 5). He contends that artificial intelligence might only resemble human intelligence if biochemical cells were incorporated into AI machines, which he sees as impossible because machines lack a soul. According to Searle, this is the fundamental difference between artificial and human intelligence. In contrast, Roger Penrose bases his argument on the fact that computer operating systems rely on mathematical and logical algorithms. He suggests that without a complete mathematical theory, we cannot achieve unlimited advancement or perfect precision in

computing. Penrose believes the human mind possesses abilities and functions that intelligent machines cannot replicate, with the brain containing an element of spirituality that cannot be reduced to algorithms. While it may be easy to believe that machines are intelligent because they perform complex tasks like living beings, it is difficult to accept that machines have any subjective experience.

Applying Islamic Ethical Principles in Artificial Intelligence

The impact of AI in Muslim societies brings both opportunities and ethical challenges. Although AI improves efficiency, education, and accessibility, it cannot imitate human moral agency, spiritual consciousness, or the ethical responsibility central to Islamic anthropology. Therefore, the thoughtful integration of AI, guided by Islamic ethical frameworks, ensures that technology contributes to human well-being rather than weakening human dignity.

The Islamic conception of man is grounded in the Qur’ānic worldview, which views human beings not just as physical creatures but as moral, spiritual, and intellectual beings created with a divine purpose. The Qur’ān portrays man as *khalīfah* (vicegerents) on earth, endowed with reason (‘aql) and bearing responsibility (*taklīf*).

“Indeed, I am going to place a vicegerent upon the earth.” (Qur’ān, 2:30)

In this verse, Allah declares His decree to appoint human beings as His representatives (*khalīfah*) on earth. This emphasizes a fundamental concept in Islam that humans are more than just physical entities; they are entrusted with a divine trust (*amānah*) and a moral obligation (*taklīf*). Human dignity comes from this distinctive role bestowed by Allah, which elevates people and grants them a higher status compared to other creatures.

“So when I have fashioned him and breathed into him of My spirit, fall down before him in prostration.” (Qur’ān, 15:29)

This verse describes the ontological duality of man, body composed of matter and the soul (*rūh*) breathed in by divine decree. According to al-Ghazālī, this divine breath is the origin of human intellect and moral consciousness, distinguishing man from mere biological beings.

“Reason is the foundation of religion; through it man recognizes his Lord and His law.” (Taymiyyah, 1995, p.310)

This view holds that ‘aql (reason) functions in harmony with revelation, acting as a means through which divine guidance is comprehended. Thus, within Islam, human identity is described as an integrated unity that combines rational, moral, and spiritual elements under the principle of divine servitude.

Islamic ethics is founded on several fundamental principles, particularly *Maṣlaḥah* (public interest/welfare), *‘Adl* (justice), *Amānah* (trust/responsibility), and *Ni’yah* (intention). Together, these principles constitute a moral framework that guides both individuals and society.

Maṣlaḥah (Public Interest)

“Whatever benefits people and brings no harm is considered *Maṣlaḥah* and is encouraged by Shariah.” (Al-Shātībī, 1988, p.57)

Al-Shātībī underscores that moral and legal reasoning should be directed toward promoting the welfare of society. In the context of artificial intelligence, this principle requires technologies to

advance social well-being while preventing harm. For example, AI applications in healthcare should prioritize patient safety and well-being rather than focusing primarily on profit or operational efficiency.

Amānah (Trust and Responsibility)

“Verily, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due.” (Al-Quran, 4:58)

Amānah means ethical responsibility and trustworthiness. It requires AI developers and users to ensure that AI systems do not violate the trust of individuals or society by protecting personal data, respecting privacy, and providing fair and equal access to AI technologies.

Ni’yah (Intention)

“Actions are judged by intentions.” (Muḥammad, 2002, Hadith, 1)

Ni’yah emphasizes that ethical evaluation depends not only on the outcomes of actions but also on the intentions behind them. In the context of AI, even if a system works effectively, it should be designed and used with good moral intentions to prevent misuse.

Implementing Islamic Moral Principles in AI designing:

- Designing artificial intelligence with a focus on public welfare (Maṣlaḥah) is essential.
- It is important to ensure that AI decision-making processes are equitable and just (‘Adl).
- Building and maintaining trust and accountability (Amānah) in the management of data and the outcomes generated by AI systems is crucial.
- Moreover, embedding moral intent (Ni’yah) into the design process, beyond mere functionality, is necessary.
- The promotion of virtue and the enhancement of human well-being, consistent with classical ethical principles, should be central aims.

This framework enables a thorough ethical evaluation of AI from an Islamic viewpoint, effectively integrating modern technological advancements with enduring moral values.

Ethical Challenges to Human Identity, Autonomy, and Free Will in the Age of AI

Human autonomy holds a fundamental place in Islamic anthropology, with free will (ikhtiyār) being vital for moral responsibility. The use of AI systems, which have the ability to make predictive decisions, prompts important questions about the potential impact on human autonomy, particularly regarding whether machine involvement or substitution in decision-making compromised this autonomy.

“Autonomy in human beings is not merely the capacity to choose but the capacity to choose rightly, guided by intellect and moral reasoning.” (Ghazali, 1983, p.312)

AI algorithms, especially in areas like government, healthcare, and social media, can quietly affect the choices people make. Although AI can help with decisions, depending too much on it might weaken our ability to think and decide for ourselves (‘aql), which could harm our moral and spiritual growth. Islamic ethics teaches that real freedom means following God's guidance and being morally responsible, which AI cannot replicate.

“Machines may act, but only humans bear responsibility for the moral quality of their actions.” (Searle, 1980, p. 417)

Islamic thought emphasizes that although AI can impact human choices through algorithms, automation, and digital nudges, it cannot replace the human ability to make moral judgments, which is essential for shaping personal identity. Therefore, the main challenge is to use AI in a way that supports human life without diminishing human freedom.

Accountability and Moral Responsibility

In Islam, accountability (*taklīf*) is closely linked to free will. Human beings are morally responsible for their actions because they have the ability to understand, make conscious choices, and exercise ethical judgment.

“Man is morally accountable because within him lies intellect that discerns good from evil; this is the trust that even the heavens and earth feared to bear.” (Āshūr, 1984, p.215)

AI systems do not possess moral consciousness, so responsibility for their actions remains with the people who design, develop, operate, and use them. This distinction is important for protecting human moral responsibility and ethical agency. Assigning accountability to AI instead of humans can weaken moral responsibility and undermine social and legal systems.

“Once AI begins to replace human judgment, ethical negligence is not excusable simply because a machine acted.” (Bostrom, 2014, p.132)

Suggestions for Human Identity

1. Loss of Autonomy: The predictive and persuasive abilities of AI may gradually diminish the exercise of human rational and moral decision-making.
2. Avoidance of Responsibility: Automation in decision-making could cause individuals or organizations to shirk ethical accountability.
3. Moral Dependence: Societies might become overly dependent on AI, weakening human moral judgment, which is a fundamental part of Islamic identity. Islamic ethics responds to these issues by emphasizing that humans remain morally and spiritually central despite AI advancements. Designing ethical AI must prioritize technology that enhances human agency rather than replaces it.

Privacy and Surveillance

AI technologies, especially used for data collection, facial recognition, and predictive analytics, pose crucial challenges to privacy, which is an essential part of human dignity in Islamic thought. In Islam, privacy (*satr* and *kifāyah*) is regarded as both an ethical and a legal imperative.

“Do not spy on one another, nor backbite; privacy is a sacred trust.” (Qur’ān, 49:12)

The Qur’ānic injunction stresses the sacredness of personal privacy and the ethical duty to uphold individual confidentiality. AI systems that enable continuous monitoring risk breaching this principle if used without proper regulation. This issue is especially significant in Muslim societies, where such surveillance can undermine social trust and violate individual rights.

“Data surveillance, if unregulated, can erode human freedom and dignity, making privacy a central ethical concern.” (Floridi, 2013, p.215)

Islamic ethics underscores that the deployment of AI systems be transparent, based on informed consent, and restricted to necessary purposes. These principles help safeguard human dignity, preserve moral agency, and protect the individual's capacity for ethical decision-making.

Bias, Discrimination, and Justice

AI systems may adopt biases present in their training data or algorithms, leading to ethical issues related to fairness and discrimination. Justice (‘Adl) is a fundamental principle in Islamic law and must be upheld without compromise in the ethics of technology.

“Indeed, Allah commands justice and the doing of good.” (Qur’ān, 16:90)

Islamic principles demand that every system impacting human life should promote fairness and equality. Bias in AI algorithms, whether in hiring, law enforcement, or financial services, can lead to unfair treatment and systemic injustice, undermining both public trust and the moral legitimacy of AI applications.

To align with Islamic ethics, AI systems should be designed with measures to detect bias, ensure algorithmic transparency, and undergo regular audits. These practices help promote fairness and equal outcomes and uphold the Islamic principle of justice for everyone.

Human Consciousness in contrast with Artificial Awareness

Human consciousness encompasses self-awareness, purposeful intention, moral judgment, and emotional complexity. On the other hand, AI demonstrates artificial awareness, which is defined by computational processing, recognizing patterns, and making decisions according to programmed algorithms. John Searle highlights this difference:

“Simulation of understanding is not equivalent to actual understanding; computers can manipulate symbols but do not possess consciousness.” (Searle, 1980, p.417)

AI can imitate cognitive abilities such as language processing and problem-solving, but it does not possess subjective experiences or consciousness (*qualia*). From an Islamic perspective, consciousness is based on the combination of ‘*aql* (intellect) and *rūh* (soul), which are connected to divine knowledge, moral responsibility, and the ability to worship Allah (‘*ibādah*). Therefore, regardless of how advanced AI becomes, it cannot possess these essential aspects of human identity.

“Artificial intelligence can act as if it reasons, but it cannot exercise ethical judgment grounded in spiritual awareness.” (Floridi, 2013, p.198)

The difference between human consciousness and artificial awareness highlights that, although AI is functionally intelligent, it lacks moral and spiritual identity. Ethical systems within Muslim societies should recognize this fundamental distinction, ensuring that AI is used to enhance human capabilities without replacing the unique nature of the soul or compromising moral responsibility.

Islamic theology clearly differentiates between human beings and artificial entities. Humans possess *rūh* (spirit), intellect (‘*aql*), and moral responsibility, while machines, including sophisticated AI, are fundamentally different in nature and cannot engage in spiritual or ethical consciousness.

“Machines may act as if conscious, but they lack subjective experience, moral understanding, and accountability before God.” (Ibid)

This theological distinction shapes both ethical and societal approaches to AI. Human identity and moral responsibility cannot be transferred to AI, highlighting that AI should be used as a tool to benefit humanity without interfering with the sacred and divinely ordained nature of human existence.

Conclusion

Artificial intelligence is not just about knowledge or technology; it also raises profound philosophical and ethical questions regarding the nature of human existence and purpose in life. It is necessary to address these essential inquiries about human nature and the meaning of life, specially, Can AI systems learn more than just logic and calculations? Is it possible to imbue them with subjective qualities such as love, empathy, creativity, and free will? To answer these issues, a deeper understanding of human experience is required. These qualities are not only products of our brains and thoughts, but also products of our feeling and human experiences but also from emotional and social interactions within a community. The question remains whether such inherently human qualities can be transferred to machines, which lack a soul. While AI may demonstrate creativity by producing art or music, the equivalence of this creativity to human creativity remains uncertain. Furthermore, whether machines can be taught to make decisions informed by emotions and love, beyond pure logic, is still unresolved. These questions define the critical boundary between human beings and artificial entities.

Ethical frameworks, particularly within the context of Islamic jurisprudence and the Maqāsid al-Sharī‘ah, provide essential guidance for the responsible use of AI. These frameworks emphasize the ontological distinction between humans endowed with a divinely granted soul and moral accountability and machines which remain devoid of these. AI must serve as a tool that enhances human flourishing without compromising human dignity, autonomy, and moral responsibility. As AI increasingly integrates into various aspects of society, influencing decision-making and shaping experiences, it is vital for societies and governments to prepare for its profound impact. This preparation involves establishing comprehensive ethical and legal standards that prioritize transparency, fairness, accountability, and respect for human values, thereby ensuring AI contributes positively to humanity’s well-being and social cohesion. The challenge lies in harnessing AI’s potential to advance human knowledge and capabilities such as predicting natural disasters or deepening our understanding of the universe while guarding against risks that may undermine social trust, human psychology, and ethical principles.

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