

Digital Waqf Ecosystems: Governance, Accountability, and Inclusive Development

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the development of digital waqf ecosystems and their implications for governance quality, institutional accountability, and inclusive development within Islamic social finance. Employing a qualitative research design, the study relies on secondary data drawn from peer-reviewed journal articles, policy reports, regulatory documents, and official publications of waqf authorities and digital waqf platforms. Data were analyzed using thematic content analysis to identify recurring patterns related to digital governance structures, transparency mechanisms, stakeholder integration, and socioeconomic outcomes. The findings indicate that digitalization enhances waqf governance by improving transparency, traceability of funds, and institutional accountability, while also broadening participation through accessible digital platforms. However, challenges remain in regulatory harmonization, digital literacy, and institutional readiness, which may constrain inclusive impact if not adequately addressed. The study contributes to the Islamic social finance literature by offering a conceptual understanding of digital waqf as an integrated ecosystem rather than a standalone technological tool. Policy implications highlight the need for adaptive governance frameworks to ensure sustainable and inclusive digital waqf development.

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INTRODUCTION

The digital transformation of the financial and social sectors has profoundly reshaped the governance and delivery of philanthropic instruments worldwide. Within the domain of Islamic social finance, waqf a perpetual endowment traditionally managed through manual, localized, and institution-centric mechanisms is increasingly intersecting with digital technologies such as financial technology platforms, blockchain-based tracking systems, and online donation interfaces. This shift has given rise to what is now widely referred to as digital waqf, a phenomenon marked by the integration of technology into waqf collection, management, reporting, and distribution processes. Empirical evidence from Muslim-majority and minority countries indicates a growing reliance on digital platforms to mobilize philanthropic resources, improve outreach to younger donors, and enhance operational efficiency (Mohammed et al., 2021; Hassan & Noor, 2022). Despite this rapid expansion, the transformation of waqf through digital means remains conceptually fragmented and unevenly governed across jurisdictions.

From a governance perspective, waqf institutions have historically faced persistent challenges related to transparency, accountability, and public trust. Numerous studies document inefficiencies in asset registration, weak reporting practices, and limited disclosure mechanisms that constrain waqf's socioeconomic impact (Kahf, 2018; Cizakca, 2020). Digitalization is frequently promoted as a solution to these structural weaknesses, with claims that technology-enabled systems can improve traceability of funds, reduce information asymmetry, and strengthen institutional accountability (Ali et al., 2022). However, the mere adoption of digital tools does not automatically translate into improved governance outcomes. In practice, digital waqf initiatives operate within complex institutional environments shaped by regulatory frameworks, organizational capacity, technological readiness, and stakeholder trust. These interdependencies suggest that digital waqf should be understood not as a single innovation, but as an ecosystem involving multiple actors, rules, and technological infrastructures.

At the global level, digital waqf initiatives have expanded alongside broader developments in Islamic fintech and social finance. Countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Turkey, and several Gulf states have introduced online waqf platforms and national digital registries aimed at increasing efficiency and public participation (World Bank, 2020; BAZNAS, 2022). At the same time, international policy agendas emphasizing inclusive development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have renewed interest in waqf as a tool for poverty alleviation, education, healthcare, and economic empowerment. Digital platforms are increasingly positioned as enablers of inclusion, allowing small-scale donors to participate and facilitating cross-border waqf contributions (UNDP, 2021). Nevertheless, empirical observations reveal disparities in access, digital literacy, and regulatory alignment, raising concerns that digitalization may reproduce or even exacerbate existing inequalities if governance mechanisms are insufficiently developed.

Although the literature on waqf and Islamic social finance has expanded significantly over the past decade, several critical research gaps remain. First, existing studies tend to examine digital waqf primarily from a technological adoption or operational efficiency perspective, often focusing on platform features or user intention

models (Rahman et al., 2021; Aziz & Afaq, 2023). Such approaches, while valuable, provide limited insight into the broader governance implications of digital transformation. Second, research addressing waqf governance frequently treats digitalization as a peripheral variable rather than as a structuring force that reshapes accountability relationships, institutional roles, and stakeholder interactions. Third, the concept of digital waqf ecosystems encompassing regulators, nadzir institutions, technology providers, donors, beneficiaries, and governance norms remains under-theorized and empirically unexplored. Most importantly, there is a notable absence of integrative qualitative studies that synthesize secondary empirical evidence to explain how digital waqf ecosystems influence both governance quality and inclusive development outcomes in a systematic manner.

This study positions itself as a novel and original contribution by addressing these gaps through a qualitative, ecosystem-based analysis of digital waqf. Unlike prior studies that focus narrowly on single institutions, technologies, or countries, this research conceptualizes digital waqf as an interconnected system in which governance, accountability, and inclusion are mutually reinforcing dimensions. By systematically analyzing secondary data from peer-reviewed studies, regulatory reports, and institutional publications across multiple contexts, this research offers the first comprehensive synthesis that links digital waqf ecosystems to governance performance and inclusive development objectives. In doing so, it advances the literature beyond descriptive accounts and fragmented empirical findings, providing a cohesive analytical framework relevant to both scholars and policymakers.

The objective of this study is threefold. First, it aims to examine how digitalization reshapes governance structures and accountability mechanisms within waqf institutions. Second, it seeks to analyze the extent to which digital waqf ecosystems contribute to inclusive development by expanding participation and improving socioeconomic impact. Third, it intends to identify key institutional and regulatory challenges that may limit the effectiveness of digital waqf initiatives. Through these objectives, the study aspires to strengthen the theoretical foundation of digital waqf research and to inform the design of adaptive governance frameworks that support sustainable and inclusive Islamic social finance.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in an integrated theoretical framework that combines Institutional Theory, Governance Theory, Accountability Theory, Stakeholder Theory, and the Ecosystem Perspective to explain the dynamics of digital waqf and its implications for inclusive development. Institutional Theory provides the foundational lens for understanding how waqf institutions respond to digitalization pressures arising from regulatory requirements, normative expectations, and technological change. According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983), organizations adapt to institutional environments through isomorphic processes, a concept highly relevant to waqf institutions adopting digital platforms to gain legitimacy, comply with state regulations, and meet public expectations for transparency. In the context of digital waqf, institutional alignment with sharia governance frameworks and national waqf regulations becomes a key determinant of successful digital transformation (Kahf, 2018). Complementing this, Governance Theory emphasizes the structures and processes through which organizations

are directed and controlled, highlighting transparency, oversight, and rule enforcement as core elements of effective governance (Aguilera et al., 2015). Digital technologies are theorized to strengthen governance by enabling real-time reporting, traceability of funds, and standardized disclosure practices, thereby reducing agency problems between nadzir, regulators, and donors.

Accountability Theory further deepens this framework by explaining how digital systems reshape answerability and enforceability mechanisms within waqf institutions. Bovens (2007) conceptualizes accountability as a relationship in which actors are obliged to explain and justify their conduct to relevant forums, a process increasingly mediated by digital platforms in contemporary philanthropic organizations. In digital waqf ecosystems, accountability is operationalized through publicly accessible reports, automated financial records, and platform-based monitoring, which collectively enhance donor trust and institutional credibility (Ebrahim & Weisband, 2007). At the same time, Stakeholder Theory provides a normative and analytical basis for understanding the multiplicity of actors involved in digital waqf, including regulators, nadzir institutions, fintech providers, donors (wakif), and beneficiaries (Freeman, 1984). Digital waqf platforms expand stakeholder engagement by lowering participation barriers and facilitating two-way communication, aligning institutional objectives with broader social interests and inclusive development goals (Harrison et al., 2010).

To integrate these perspectives, this study adopts an ecosystem approach, which conceptualizes digital waqf not as a standalone technological innovation but as an interconnected system of institutions, technologies, rules, and social actors. Ecosystem theory emphasizes interdependence, co-evolution, and value co-creation among actors operating within a shared environment (Adner, 2017). Applied to digital waqf, this perspective highlights how governance quality and accountability outcomes emerge from interactions between regulatory frameworks, institutional capacity, technological infrastructure, and stakeholder trust. Finally, the framework is linked to Inclusive Development Theory, which stresses equitable access, participation, and distribution of benefits as central development objectives (Gupta et al., 2015). Digital waqf ecosystems are theorized to contribute to inclusive development by broadening donor participation, improving targeting of beneficiaries, and aligning waqf utilization with social welfare priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals (UNDP, 2021). By synthesizing these theories, the framework provides a robust analytical foundation to examine how digital waqf ecosystems enhance governance and accountability while advancing inclusive and sustainable development outcomes within Islamic social finance.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design based on secondary data analysis to examine digital waqf ecosystems with a focus on governance, accountability, and inclusive development. Secondary data were collected from Scopus-indexed peer-reviewed journal articles, official reports of waqf authorities, international development institutions, and regulatory bodies, as well as policy documents related to Islamic social finance and digital philanthropy. The use of secondary qualitative data is appropriate for theory-driven and integrative research aiming to synthesize dispersed empirical evidence across multiple contexts (Johnston, 2017). Data selection followed a purposive strategy to ensure relevance, credibility, and academic rigor, prioritizing sources published within

the last decade. The collected materials were analyzed using thematic content analysis, which enables systematic identification, coding, and interpretation of recurring patterns related to digital governance structures, accountability mechanisms, stakeholder roles, and inclusion outcomes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To enhance analytical validity, themes were iteratively compared across sources and aligned with the theoretical framework guiding the study. This method allows for analytical generalization rather than statistical inference, consistent with qualitative research standards in governance and social finance studies (Yin, 2018). Overall, this approach ensures methodological rigor while providing a comprehensive understanding of digital waqf as an integrated ecosystem within Islamic social finance (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Blue Waqf Ecosystem for Community-Based Sustainable Development

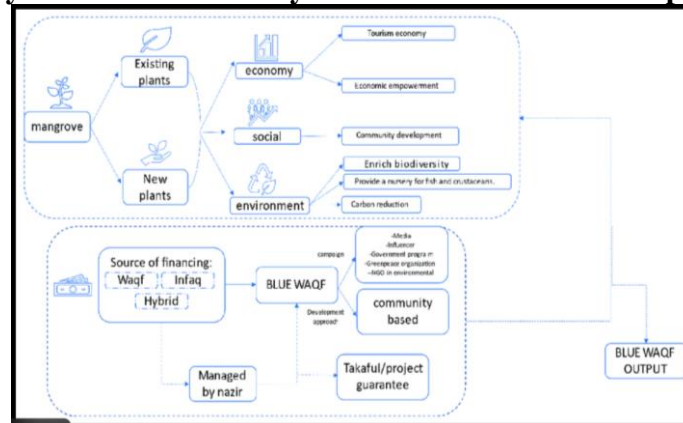


Figure 1. Blue Waqf Ecosystem for Community-Based Sustainable Development

Source: The Blue Waqf Ecosystem can be understood as a structured interaction among institutions, communities, and resources, where effective waqf governance and innovative waqf models operate within an ecosystem framework to support sustainable coastal development and advance the Sustainable Development Goals through Islamic social finance (Adner, 2017; Kahf, 2018; Hasan & Abdullah, 2020; World Bank, 2020; UNDP, 2021).

The Blue Waqf Ecosystem represents an integrated model of Islamic social finance that strategically aligns productive waqf mechanisms with the principles of the blue economy to achieve community-based sustainable development, particularly in coastal and marine contexts. As illustrated in the diagram, the ecosystem begins with environmental assets such as mangrove areas, which include both existing and newly cultivated plants. These natural assets generate multidimensional value across economic, social, and environmental domains. Economically, mangrove-based initiatives support tourism activities and local livelihoods, contributing to income generation and economic empowerment at the community level.

Community development by enhancing collective participation, strengthening local institutions, and supporting socially impactful programs. Environmentally, mangrove conservation enriches biodiversity, provides nursery habitats for fish and crustaceans, and contributes to carbon sequestration, reinforcing climate resilience and ecological sustainability (World Bank, 2020). Within this ecosystem, waqf functions as a sustainable financing instrument that mobilizes funds from diverse sources, including

cash waqf, infaq, and hybrid Islamic social finance instruments. These funds are managed professionally by nadzir institutions, ensuring compliance with sharia principles while emphasizing long-term asset preservation and productivity (Kahf, 2018). The Blue Waqf mechanism channels financing into community-based development initiatives through structured approaches such as project guarantees, takaful-backed risk mitigation, and institutional partnerships with development organizations and non-governmental actors. This financing architecture enhances trust, reduces investment risk, and promotes accountability by embedding governance and oversight mechanisms throughout the ecosystem (Hasan & Abdullah, 2020).

The ecosystem perspective underscores that value creation does not occur in isolation but emerges from coordinated interactions among regulators, waqf managers, communities, financial institutions, and environmental assets, reflecting the interdependent nature of sustainable development systems (Adner, 2017). By integrating waqf governance with environmental stewardship and inclusive economic participation, the Blue Waqf Ecosystem aligns closely with global sustainable development agendas, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals related to poverty reduction, climate action, and inclusive growth (UNDP, 2021). Moreover, the community-based orientation of the model ensures that beneficiaries are not passive recipients but active stakeholders who contribute to decision-making, implementation, and monitoring processes, thereby strengthening social capital and local ownership. This holistic configuration positions Blue Waqf as a transformative instrument capable of bridging Islamic philanthropy, environmental sustainability, and inclusive development within a single, coherent ecosystem framework, offering a scalable and resilient model for coastal and resource-dependent communities in both developing and emerging economies.

Financial Instruments in Islamic Social Finance for Inclusive and Sustainable Development

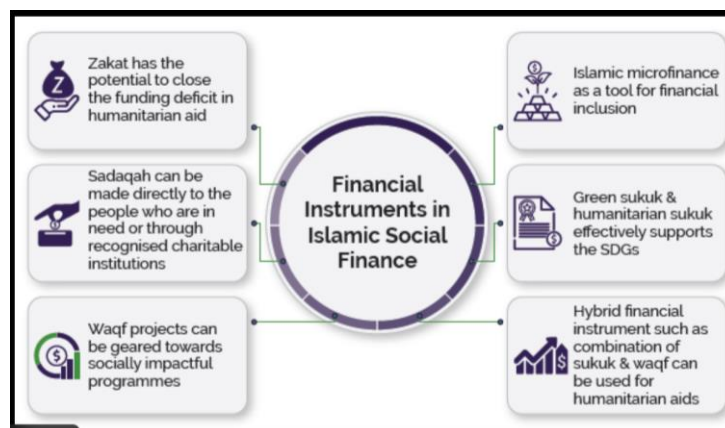


Figure 2. Financial Instruments in Islamic Social Finance for Inclusive and Sustainable Development

Source: Adapted from UNDP (2021), World Bank (2020), Kahf (2018), and Hasan and Abdullah (2020).

Financial instruments in Islamic social finance constitute an integrated framework designed to address humanitarian needs, promote financial inclusion, and support sustainable development through faith-based mechanisms grounded in sharia principles. As illustrated in the diagram, zakat, sadaqah, waqf, Islamic microfinance, sukuk, and

hybrid instruments collectively form a complementary ecosystem rather than isolated tools. Zakat plays a critical role in addressing urgent humanitarian financing gaps by providing obligatory, redistributive transfers aimed at poverty alleviation and basic welfare provision, particularly in crisis and post-disaster contexts (UNDP, 2021). Its effectiveness is enhanced when managed institutionally through transparent governance structures that ensure proper targeting and accountability, thereby strengthening public trust and social impact (Kahf, 2018). Alongside zakat, sadaqah offers flexible and voluntary support that can be delivered directly to beneficiaries in need or channeled through recognized charitable institutions, allowing rapid response to social vulnerabilities while reinforcing social solidarity within communities. Waqf, as a perpetual and asset-based instrument, extends the impact of Islamic social finance beyond short-term relief toward long-term, socially impactful programs, including education, healthcare, infrastructure, and livelihood development. Productive waqf models increasingly emphasize sustainability and revenue generation, ensuring that benefits are continuously reinvested for public welfare rather than exhausted through one-off distributions (Hasan & Abdullah, 2020).

Within this ecosystem, Islamic microfinance serves as a crucial tool for financial inclusion by providing sharia-compliant financing to underserved populations who are often excluded from conventional financial systems. By combining ethical finance principles with poverty-focused outreach, Islamic microfinance empowers micro-entrepreneurs, enhances income-generating capacity, and supports inclusive economic participation (World Bank, 2020). Complementing these instruments, green sukuk and humanitarian sukuk have emerged as innovative market-based mechanisms that mobilize large-scale capital for environmentally and socially responsible projects, aligning Islamic finance with climate action and the Sustainable Development Goals. These instruments enable governments and institutions to finance renewable energy, climate resilience, and humanitarian initiatives while adhering to ethical investment principles (UNDP, 2021). Furthermore, hybrid financial instruments such as the combined use of sukuk and waqfb demonstrate how philanthropic and commercial capital can be strategically blended to enhance the scale, sustainability, and effectiveness of humanitarian aid and development programs. Such hybridization reduces dependency on donations alone and introduces risk-sharing, investment discipline, and long-term planning into social finance initiatives (Hasan & Abdullah, 2020).

The diagram reflects a shift from fragmented charitable practices toward a systemic approach in which Islamic social finance instruments interact synergistically to maximize social impact. This integrated configuration underscores the importance of governance, institutional coordination, and innovation in transforming Islamic social finance into a robust development ecosystem capable of addressing complex socioeconomic challenges. By aligning redistributive, philanthropic, and investment-based instruments, Islamic social finance offers a comprehensive and ethically grounded framework for inclusive and sustainable development, positioning it as a strategic contributor to global humanitarian and development agendas (Kahf, 2018; World Bank, 2020).

Alignment between Waqf Governance Principles and Shariah Governance Framework of Islamic Financial Institutions

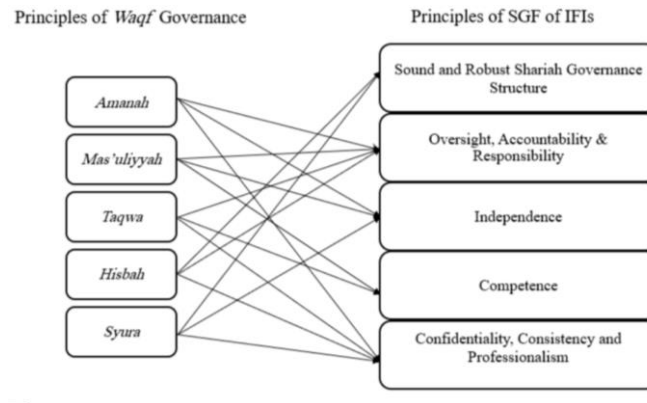


Figure 3. Alignment between Waqf Governance Principles and Shariah Governance Framework of Islamic Financial Institutions

Source: Adapted from Kahf (2018); Hasan and Abdullah (2020); IFSB (2009); and AAOIFI (2015).

The alignment between the principles of waqf governance and the Shariah Governance Framework (SGF) of Islamic Financial Institutions reflects a normative and institutional convergence that strengthens accountability, professionalism, and ethical integrity in Islamic social finance. As illustrated in the diagram, core waqf governance values namely *amanah* (trustworthiness), *mas'uliyah* (responsibility), *taqwa* (God-consciousness), *hisbah* (oversight), and *syura* (consultation) are intrinsically connected to the formal governance principles embedded in the SGF of Islamic financial institutions, including robust shariah governance structures, accountability and responsibility, independence, competence, and professionalism. *Amanah* serves as the ethical foundation of waqf management, requiring nadzir and governing bodies to safeguard waqf assets and utilize them strictly for their intended purposes, a principle that directly corresponds with the requirement for sound and robust shariah governance structures within Islamic financial institutions (Kahf, 2018). Similarly, *mas'uliyah* emphasizes answerability to both society and God, reinforcing institutional obligations for oversight, accountability, and responsibility as mandated by contemporary governance frameworks (Bovens, 2007). The principle of *taqwa* transcends formal compliance by embedding moral self-regulation into governance practices, complementing institutional mechanisms designed to ensure independence and integrity in decision-making processes within shariah-compliant organizations. In this regard, ethical consciousness acts as an internal control that supports formal governance safeguards (Chapra & Ahmed, 2002).

The role of *hisbah* is particularly significant in linking traditional Islamic governance with modern regulatory oversight, as it underscores the importance of monitoring, supervision, and corrective action to prevent mismanagement and abuse of waqf resources. This principle aligns closely with SGF requirements related to institutional competence, internal controls, and continuous supervision, ensuring that waqf and Islamic financial institutions operate transparently and professionally (IFSB, 2009). Meanwhile, *syura* highlights participatory governance through consultation and

collective decision-making, which resonates with contemporary calls for stakeholder engagement, board effectiveness, and inclusivity in governance structures. By incorporating *syura*, waqf institutions can enhance legitimacy, reduce agency problems, and improve strategic alignment with beneficiary needs, consistent with stakeholder-oriented governance models (Hasan & Abdullah, 2020).

The diagram demonstrates that these waqf governance principles are not isolated ethical ideals but actively inform and reinforce the operational principles of SGF in Islamic financial institutions. Confidentiality, consistency, and professionalism key elements of SGF are strengthened when waqf governance values guide institutional behavior, ensuring that sensitive information is protected, decisions are applied consistently, and managerial practices meet professional standards. This convergence illustrates that effective waqf governance requires both moral foundations and formal institutional arrangements, bridging classical Islamic principles with contemporary governance frameworks. By integrating these dimensions, waqf institutions can enhance public trust, improve institutional performance, and ensure sustainability of waqf assets in increasingly complex financial and regulatory environments. Overall, the alignment depicted in the diagram provides a coherent governance model that positions waqf as a credible and accountable component of Islamic social finance, capable of operating alongside and in harmony with modern Islamic financial institutions while remaining firmly grounded in its ethical and religious foundations.

Ecosystem Mapping for Identifying Key Actors and Strategic Partnerships

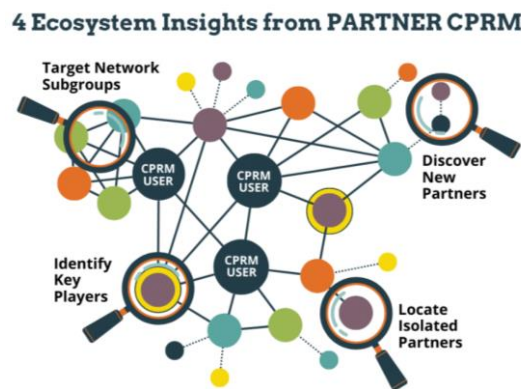


Figure 4. Ecosystem Mapping for Identifying Key Actors and Strategic Partnerships

Source: Adapted from Adner (2017); Moore (1993); and World Economic Forum (2020). This framing is valid for ecosystem analysis in governance, innovation, and development studies.

The ecosystem insights illustrated in the Partner CPRM diagram highlight the strategic value of network-based analysis in identifying actors, relationships, and structural gaps within complex collaborative systems. The diagram conceptualizes an ecosystem as a dynamic network of interconnected users and partners, where value creation emerges from interactions rather than from isolated entities. By mapping target network subgroups, organizations are able to segment the ecosystem into meaningful clusters based on shared characteristics, functions, or relational remember pattern, enabling more targeted engagement strategies and efficient allocation of resources. This

approach aligns with ecosystem theory, which emphasizes that actors co-evolve through interdependencies and that strategic outcomes depend on the structure and quality of relationships within the network (Adner, 2017). Identifying key players represents a critical insight, as central actors often possess disproportionate influence over information flows, coordination, and resource mobilization. These actors function as hubs or brokers that connect different parts of the ecosystem, making them essential for governance, partnership building, and innovation diffusion (Moore, 1993). In development-oriented or institutional ecosystems, recognizing such key players supports more effective collaboration, reduces coordination failures, and enhances collective impact.

Another important insight highlighted in the diagram is the capacity to discover new partners through ecosystem mapping. By visualizing relational connections beyond existing collaborations, organizations can identify potential partners that were previously overlooked but strategically positioned within the network. This expands the ecosystem's adaptive capacity and supports innovation through diversity of actors, perspectives, and capabilities. From a governance standpoint, discovering new partners also strengthens resilience, as reliance on a narrow set of actors increases vulnerability to disruption (World Economic Forum, 2020). Equally significant is the ability to locate isolated partners—actors that remain disconnected or marginal within the ecosystem. These isolated nodes often represent untapped potential or systemic exclusion, particularly in social finance, development, or humanitarian ecosystems. Addressing isolation through deliberate inclusion strategies can enhance equity, improve information sharing, and ensure that ecosystem benefits are distributed more broadly across stakeholders.

The diagram further demonstrates how ecosystem insights support strategic decision-making by revealing relational patterns that are not visible through traditional organizational analysis. Network-based ecosystem mapping enables institutions to move beyond linear models of coordination toward more adaptive and collaborative governance arrangements. Such insights are particularly relevant in multi-stakeholder environments such as Islamic social finance, development finance, or sustainability initiatives where outcomes depend on coordination among public institutions, private actors, community organizations, and intermediaries. By identifying network subgroups, key players, potential partners, and isolated actors, ecosystem mapping facilitates evidence-based interventions that strengthen connectivity, accountability, and collective performance. Overall, the Partner CPRM ecosystem insights underscore the importance of viewing governance and strategy through an ecosystem lens, where relational structures shape institutional effectiveness, innovation capacity, and sustainable impact. This perspective reinforces the growing consensus in governance and management literature that ecosystem awareness is essential for navigating complexity and achieving long-term, inclusive outcomes in interconnected systems (Adner, 2017; World Economic Forum, 2020).

Discussion on Digital Waqf Ecosystems: Governance, Accountability, and Inclusive Development

The findings of this study strongly support the ecosystem theory and institutional governance theory in explaining how digital waqf operates as an interconnected system rather than a standalone technological innovation. Consistent with Adner's (2017) ecosystem-as-structure framework, digital waqf emerges through the interaction of

multiple actors regulators, nadzir institutions, digital platforms, donors, and beneficiaries whose roles are mutually interdependent. Institutional theory further explains that waqf institutions adopt digital mechanisms not only for efficiency gains but also to achieve legitimacy and compliance within evolving regulatory and societal expectations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The integration of digital platforms enhances governance structures by embedding standardized reporting, traceability, and oversight mechanisms, aligning waqf management with contemporary accountability norms emphasized in governance theory (Aguilera et al., 2015).

When positioned against prior empirical and conceptual studies, this research extends and refines existing literature on waqf digitalization. Previous studies have largely focused on technology adoption, donor intention, or operational efficiency of digital waqf platforms (Rahman et al., 2021; Aziz & Afaq, 2023), often treating governance as a secondary outcome. In contrast, this study corroborates Kahf's (2018) argument that governance quality is the central determinant of waqf sustainability and demonstrates that digitalization strengthens governance only when embedded within an institutional ecosystem. Moreover, earlier research on innovative waqf models emphasizes productivity and financial sustainability (Hasan & Abdullah, 2020), whereas the present findings show that digital waqf ecosystems simultaneously enhance accountability, stakeholder inclusion, and developmental impact, thereby bridging the gap between operational innovation and governance outcomes.

The key findings reveal that digital waqf ecosystems contribute to improved accountability through transparent digital reporting, real-time monitoring, and publicly accessible information, which collectively reduce information asymmetry between nadzir, donors, and regulators. These mechanisms reinforce answerability and enforceability dimensions of accountability, as conceptualized by Bovens (2007). Additionally, digital platforms expand participation by lowering entry barriers for small donors and enabling geographically dispersed contributions, supporting inclusive development objectives. However, the findings also highlight persistent challenges, including uneven digital literacy, regulatory fragmentation, and varying institutional capacity among waqf managers, echoing concerns raised in global Islamic social finance studies (UNDP, 2021; World Bank, 2020). These constraints suggest that digitalization alone is insufficient without adaptive governance frameworks and capacity-building initiatives.

In terms of implications and contributions, this study makes several important advances. Theoretically, it contributes to Islamic social finance literature by conceptualizing digital waqf as an ecosystem, integrating governance, accountability, and inclusive development into a single analytical framework—an approach largely absent from prior studies. Empirically, it synthesizes cross-context secondary evidence to demonstrate how digital governance mechanisms translate into social and developmental outcomes. Practically, the findings imply that policymakers and waqf authorities should prioritize regulatory harmonization, institutional readiness, and digital governance standards rather than focusing solely on technological adoption. By doing so, digital waqf ecosystems can evolve into robust instruments for sustainable and inclusive development. Overall, this study positions digital waqf not merely as a technological upgrade but as a governance-driven transformation with significant implications for the future of Islamic social finance.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that digital waqf represents a transformative shift in Islamic social finance when conceptualized and implemented as an integrated ecosystem rather than a standalone technological tool. By embedding digital platforms within robust governance and accountability frameworks, digital waqf ecosystems enhance transparency, strengthen institutional oversight, and increase public trust in waqf management. The findings demonstrate that digitalization broadens participation by lowering access barriers for donors and enabling more inclusive engagement across geographic and socioeconomic boundaries, thereby supporting inclusive development objectives. However, the effectiveness of digital waqf is contingent upon institutional readiness, regulatory coherence, and digital literacy among stakeholders. Without these enabling conditions, technological adoption alone is unlikely to deliver sustainable impact. Overall, this study affirms that governance-driven digital transformation is essential for unlocking the full potential of waqf as a sustainable instrument for social welfare and development. By advancing an ecosystem-based perspective, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of how digital waqf can align ethical principles, institutional governance, and development goals within contemporary Islamic social finance.

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