AN ANALYSIS OF THE HIERARCHY OF NEEDS IN ISLAMIC ECONOMICS: INTEGRATING NEEDS, WANTS, AND DESIRES BASED ON MAQASID AL-SHARIAH

Dewi Kurniasari
UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung
Email: dewi_kurniasari@uinsgd.ac.id

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the hierarchy of needs within the framework of Islamic economics by integrating the concepts of needs, wants, and desires based on Maqasid al-Shariah. Unlike conventional economic perspectives that often prioritize unlimited wants and individual utility maximization, Islamic economics emphasizes a value-based approach grounded in ethical and spiritual considerations. This research adopts a qualitative method using a systematic literature review to synthesize relevant scholarly works from reputable academic sources. The data were collected from peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and authoritative publications related to Islamic economics and Maqasid al-Shariah. Through thematic and content analysis, this study identifies key conceptual distinctions and interrelationships among needs, wants, and desires in both conventional and Islamic paradigms. The findings reveal that Islamic economics categorizes human needs into essential (daruriyyat), complementary (hajiyyat), and embellishment (tahsiniyyat), which serve as a structured hierarchy aligned with the objectives of Shariah. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that wants and desires are not rejected but are regulated to ensure alignment with ethical principles and societal welfare. The integration of these elements within the Maqasid framework provides a more balanced and sustainable model of economic behavior. This study contributes to the enrichment of Islamic economic theory by offering a conceptual model that bridges classical and contemporary perspectives. Ultimately, the findings highlight the importance of embedding moral values and social justice in shaping economic decision-making processes.

Keywords: Islamic economics, hierarchy of needs, Maqasid al-Shariah, consumer behavior, needs and desires integration.

INTRODUCTION

The foundational principles of Islamic economics are rooted in a normative framework that integrates material, ethical, and spiritual dimensions of human life, distinguishing it fundamentally from value-neutral conventional economic systems (Arif, 1989). Central to this framework is the concept of Maqasid al-Shariah, which refers to the higher objectives of Islamic law aimed at preserving religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth, thereby guiding economic behavior toward holistic human well-being (Kamali, 2008). Within this paradigm, human needs are systematically categorized into daruriyyat (essentials), hajiyyat (complementary needs), and tahsiniyyat (embellishments), reflecting a structured hierarchy that prioritizes necessity and social welfare over excessive consumption (Dusuki & Bouheraoua, 2011). This classification not only regulates individual preferences but also aligns economic activities with moral accountability and societal justice, reinforcing the ethical foundation of consumption and resource allocation (Laldin & Furqani, 2013). Islamic economics redefines the concept of needs by embedding them within a value-driven system that seeks balance between worldly pursuits and spiritual fulfillment (Auda, 2008).

The conceptualization of needs, wants, and desires in contemporary economic theory remains largely anchored in the principle of utility maximization, where individuals are assumed to act rationally to achieve the highest level of satisfaction from available resources (Mohajan & Mohajan, 2023). Recent scholarly critiques argue that such a framework is increasingly insufficient, as it overlooks ethical considerations and fails to adequately address issues of justice, sustainability, and social welfare in modern economic systems (Soeharto et al., 2025). This limitation is particularly evident as utilitarian-based models tend to prioritize aggregate efficiency while neglecting distributive equity and moral

accountability in economic decision-making (Soeharto et al., 2025). The absence of a normative and value-oriented hierarchy within conventional economics contributes to imbalanced consumption patterns and weakens the ethical foundation of economic behavior (Mohajan & Mohajan, 2023). Therefore, re-evaluating the conceptual basis of needs and desires is essential to develop a more holistic and ethically grounded economic framework.

Despite the growing body of literature in Islamic economics, limited studies have systematically integrated the concepts of needs, wants, and desires within a unified Maqasid al-Shariah framework, resulting in a fragmented understanding of consumer behavior (Furqani & Haneef, 2011). Existing research tends to examine these elements in isolation, often emphasizing either the normative dimensions of Maqasid or the functional aspects of economic behavior without establishing a coherent hierarchical model (Kasri & Ahmed, 2015). This gap indicates the absence of a comprehensive conceptual framework that simultaneously captures ethical values, behavioral motivations, and economic priorities in Islamic thought. The lack of integration restricts the development of a holistic model capable of guiding both individual decision-making and policy formulation. Addressing this gap is therefore essential to advance Islamic economic theory and to provide a more structured and value-oriented understanding of human needs and desires.

This study aims to develop a comprehensive conceptual framework that integrates needs, wants, and desires within the Maqasid al-Shariah perspective to construct a structured hierarchy of needs in Islamic economics. By synthesizing recent scholarly discussions, the study seeks to reinterpret economic behavior through a value-based lens that aligns individual preferences with ethical, social, and sustainability objectives (Jan et al., 2021). In doing so, it contributes to bridging the gap between normative Islamic principles and contemporary economic analysis, particularly in the context of welfare and responsible consumption (Rahman & Hassan, 2023). The proposed framework is expected to provide theoretical enrichment by clarifying the relationship between human motivation and Shariah objectives in economic decision-making. Ultimately, this study offers a foundation for future research and policy formulation that emphasizes balance, justice, and sustainability within Islamic economic systems.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative research design based on a structured literature review to examine the hierarchy of needs within the framework of Islamic economics. The approach focuses on systematically identifying, selecting, and synthesizing relevant academic sources that discuss needs, wants, desires, and Maqasid al-Shariah. Data were collected from peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, and reputable academic publications indexed in recognized databases. The selection process applied inclusion criteria such as relevance to the research topic, conceptual rigor, and contribution to Islamic economic discourse, while excluding sources lacking academic credibility or thematic alignment. The reviewed literature primarily spans contemporary discussions to ensure the relevance of the analysis to current scholarly debates. A thematic analysis technique was employed to categorize and interpret key concepts, allowing for the identification of patterns and relationships among the variables studied. The analysis further integrates conceptual insights to construct a coherent framework that aligns economic behavior with the objectives of Shariah. This method enables a comprehensive understanding of how needs, wants, and desires are conceptualized and structured within Islamic economics. The findings are then synthesized to develop a hierarchical model grounded in Maqasid al-Shariah. This methodological approach ensures analytical depth, conceptual clarity, and theoretical contribution to the study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that conventional economics conceptualizes needs, wants, and desires primarily through a utilitarian framework that emphasizes preference satisfaction and rational choice, thereby treating all forms of demand as equally legitimate within market dynamics (Hausman, 2012). In contrast, Islamic economics introduces a normative distinction by categorizing human motivations based

on ethical priorities and moral accountability, which fundamentally differentiates between essential needs and excessive desires (Haneef & Furqani, 2011). This study finds that while conventional theory tends to blur the boundaries between needs and wants, Islamic economic thought explicitly regulates these categories to ensure alignment with social welfare and spiritual well-being. Such differentiation becomes critical in addressing issues of overconsumption and resource misallocation, which conventional models often fail to adequately resolve (Hausman, 2012). Furthermore, Islamic perspectives emphasize that desires must be disciplined within ethical limits, thereby preventing the dominance of materialistic impulses in economic behavior (Haneef & Furqani, 2011). This analysis confirms that the absence of a moral hierarchy in conventional economics weakens its capacity to guide responsible consumption patterns. By contrast, Islamic economics offers a structured and value-driven approach that integrates moral considerations into economic decision-making. The study highlights a fundamental conceptual divergence that positions Islamic economics as a more holistic framework for understanding human behavior. This comparison reinforces the need to reconsider the role of ethics in economic theory and practice. The distinction identified in this study contributes to the development of a more balanced and sustainable conceptualization of human needs.

The findings reveal that Islamic economics systematically structures human needs into a hierarchical framework based on Maqasid al-Shariah, categorizing them into daruriyyat, hajiyyat, and tahsiniyyat to ensure the prioritization of essential welfare over secondary and complementary interests. This structured classification contrasts with conventional economic approaches that generally lack a normative hierarchy and treat preferences as equally valid regardless of their social or ethical implications (Auda, 2008). The analysis shows that daruriyyat focuses on the preservation of fundamental human necessities, while hajiyyat and tahsiniyyat address comfort and refinement without compromising core well-being. Such a hierarchy enables a more disciplined allocation of resources and guides individuals toward balanced consumption behavior aligned with societal interests. Moreover, this framework embeds ethical considerations directly into economic decision-making, thereby linking individual actions with broader objectives of justice and welfare (Auda, 2008). The study also finds that the Maqasid-based hierarchy offers a dynamic and flexible model that can adapt to contemporary socio-economic challenges without losing its normative foundation (Kasri, 2016). Compared to conventional models, this approach provides clearer guidance in distinguishing between necessity and excess, particularly in addressing issues such as consumerism and inequality. The hierarchical structuring of needs within Islamic economics enhances both theoretical coherence and practical applicability. This reinforces the argument that economic behavior should not only be efficient but also ethically grounded and socially responsible. The findings highlight the significance of Maqasid al-Shariah as a foundational framework for redefining priorities in economic life.

The findings indicate that Islamic economics integrates needs, wants, and desires within a value-based framework that aligns individual consumption behavior with ethical principles and social welfare objectives, thereby moving beyond the purely preference-driven model of conventional economics (Dusuki & Abdullah, 2007). This study shows that, unlike conventional theory which often treats wants and desires as unlimited and self-justifying, Islamic economics regulates them through moral constraints derived from Maqasid al-Shariah, ensuring that consumption remains balanced and socially responsible. The analysis reveals that wants and desires are not eliminated but are reoriented to support human well-being without leading to excess or harm, reinforcing the principle of moderation in economic behavior (Furqani & Haneef, 2012). Furthermore, this integrative approach establishes a coherent relationship between material satisfaction and spiritual accountability, thereby embedding ethical considerations into everyday economic decisions. In comparison, conventional frameworks tend to separate economic

activity from moral values, which can result in overconsumption and weakened social cohesion (Dusuki & Abdullah, 2007). The study also finds that integrating these elements enables a more holistic understanding of human motivation by acknowledging both rational and ethical dimensions of behavior. This approach strengthens the theoretical foundation of Islamic economics by providing a structured mechanism to evaluate consumption priorities. The integration of needs, wants, and desires contributes to a more sustainable and equitable economic system. This reinforces the importance of incorporating value-based principles into economic analysis and policy formulation. The findings highlight that Islamic economics offers a balanced model that harmonizes individual preferences with collective welfare.

The findings demonstrate that the development of a Maqasid-based hierarchical model of needs provides a comprehensive framework for guiding both individual economic behavior and public policy within Islamic economics. This study constructs a model that systematically integrates ethical priorities with economic decision-making, ensuring that resource allocation aligns with the preservation of essential human interests and societal welfare (Alam & Shahid, 2020). In contrast to conventional models that rely heavily on market-driven preferences, the proposed framework introduces a value-oriented hierarchy that enables policymakers to distinguish between necessary and excessive consumption more effectively. The analysis reveals that such a model not only enhances theoretical clarity but also offers practical relevance in addressing contemporary challenges such as inequality, overconsumption, and unsustainable development (Alam & Shahid, 2020). Furthermore, the model emphasizes the role of Maqasid al-Shariah as a guiding principle for policy formulation, particularly in promoting justice, balance, and long-term societal well-being (Chapra, 2016). This comparative evaluation indicates that integrating Maqasid into economic modeling strengthens the capacity of Islamic economics to provide actionable solutions grounded in ethical values. The study also finds that the proposed hierarchy can serve as a normative benchmark for evaluating economic performance beyond conventional efficiency metrics. This model contributes to bridging the gap between theory and practice in Islamic economic thought. It reinforces the importance of embedding moral considerations into policy design and economic planning. The Maqasid-based hierarchical model offers a robust foundation for developing a more equitable and sustainable economic system.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Islamic economics offers a fundamentally different and more holistic understanding of human needs by integrating material, ethical, and spiritual dimensions within a structured framework. The analysis confirms that conventional economic perspectives fail to adequately distinguish between needs, wants, and desires due to their reliance on utility maximization and value-neutral assumptions. In contrast, Islamic economics introduces a clear moral hierarchy that prioritizes essential needs over excessive desires, ensuring alignment with broader social welfare. The study demonstrates that the Maqasid al-Shariah framework provides a systematic basis for categorizing human needs into daruriyyat, hajiyyat, and tahsiniyyat. This classification enables a more disciplined and balanced approach to consumption and resource allocation. Furthermore, the integration of needs, wants, and desires within this framework ensures that economic behavior remains ethically grounded and socially responsible. The findings also reveal that Islamic economics does not reject human desires but regulates them within acceptable moral boundaries. This approach promotes moderation and prevents the negative consequences of overconsumption and materialism. The proposed hierarchical model offers a comprehensive tool for understanding and guiding economic behavior. It also provides a strong theoretical foundation for aligning individual decision-making with collective welfare. The model enhances the relevance of Islamic economics in addressing contemporary economic challenges such as inequality and sustainability. The study highlights that embedding ethical values into economic systems

can lead to more just and balanced outcomes. It further emphasizes the importance of integrating normative principles into economic analysis and policy formulation. The findings contribute to the advancement of Islamic economic thought by bridging conceptual gaps in existing literature. They also open new avenues for future research in developing applied models based on Maqasid al-Shariah. The study underscores the need for policymakers to adopt value-based frameworks in designing economic strategies. Islamic economics provides a robust and ethically driven alternative to conventional economic systems. It offers a pathway toward achieving sustainable development and social justice. This research reinforces the importance of aligning economic activities with moral and spiritual objectives. The study affirms that a Maqasid-based hierarchy of needs can serve as a foundation for a more equitable and sustainable economic paradigm.

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