Integrating Maqasid al-Shariah and Islamic Legal Maxims into School Disaster Risk Management: A Conceptual Framework

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ABSTRACT

Schools in hazard-exposed Muslim-majority settings are expected to meet international school-safety standards, yet the frameworks that guide them, notably the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and the Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF) 2022–2030, are written in a technical vocabulary that seldom engages the ethical and legal reasoning through which school communities in these settings interpret risk, duty, and authority. Existing research on religion and disaster has largely examined religious institutions and beliefs as social facts, while the normative resources of Islamic law have rarely been used to design institutional practice. This conceptual paper addresses that gap by developing a framework that integrates *maqasid al-shariah* (the higher objectives of Islamic law) and *al-qawa'id al-fiqhiyyah* (Islamic legal maxims) into school disaster risk management. Following a theory-synthesis design, the paper treats the international disaster risk reduction literature as the domain theory and the Islamic jurisprudential tradition as the method theory. It distinguishes established juristic principles from their proposed contemporary applications and shows how competing maxims were reconciled. The resulting three-layer framework positions the *maqasid* and their contextual prioritisation as the objectives of school safety, maps specific legal maxims onto the four phases of prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, and links the outcome to the pillars of the CSSF. The framework grounds educational continuity in the preservation of intellect (*hifz al-'aql*), reframes preparedness as a religious obligation that counters fatalism, and is positioned within Oman's national emergency management system. An illustrative cyclone scenario in Sohar, Oman, shows how the framework can structure school leaders' decisions. The paper concludes with five propositions and a validation agenda involving school administrators, jurists, and disaster management professionals.

Keywords: maqasid al-shariah; Islamic legal maxims; disaster risk management; school safety; Oman

INTRODUCTION

Schools occupy a distinctive place in disaster risk reduction. They concentrate large numbers of children in a single location for most of the day, they often serve as community shelters when hazards strike, and their closure interrupts learning in ways that can outlast the physical damage of an event. Children are not only physically more vulnerable than adults during hazards; they also depend on adults to make protective decisions on their behalf, which places a heavy moral and practical responsibility on teachers and school leaders (Peek, 2008). For these reasons, international policy has treated school safety as a priority. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 calls for the resilience of critical infrastructure, including educational facilities (UNISDR, 2015), and the Comprehensive School Safety Framework (CSSF) 2022–2030 organises school safety around a foundation of enabling systems and policies and three pillars: safer learning facilities, school safety and educational continuity management, and risk reduction and resilience education (GADRRRES, 2022).

These frameworks are deliberately universal and technical. Their strength lies in a shared vocabulary of hazard, vulnerability, exposure, and capacity that can travel across national systems. Their limitation is that they say little about the moral and legal reasoning through which school leaders, teachers, parents, and students in

particular cultural settings understand why they should act, how they should weigh competing goods under pressure, and whom they should obey when instructions conflict. Disaster scholarship has long acknowledged that religious belief shapes risk perception and behaviour, sometimes by strengthening social capital and coping, and sometimes by encouraging fatalism (Chester, 2005; Gianisa & Le De, 2018; Paradise, 2005). Studies from Muslim contexts have documented the role of the mosque as a site of relief, shelter, and recovery after earthquakes in Pakistan and Indonesia (Cheema et al., 2014; Gianisa & Le De, 2018), and the influence of religious leaders and networks on how communities respond and recover (Joakim & White, 2015). Far less attention has been paid to the normative resources of Islamic law itself, and in particular to whether its objectives and legal maxims can function as an operational decision framework for institutions such as schools.

The Sultanate of Oman illustrates why this question matters. The country's coastline is exposed to tropical cyclones from the Arabian Sea. In June 2007, Cyclone Gonu produced a storm surge and flooding along the eastern coast that caused extensive damage (Fritz et al., 2010). On 3 October 2021, Tropical Cyclone Shaheen made landfall on the Al Batinah coast. According to Oman's Directorate General of Meteorology, it was the second most powerful tropical cyclone to affect the area in 130 years, with its greatest impact on the stretch from Al-Musannah to Sohar (Directorate General of Meteorology, n.d.). Before landfall, 37 shelter centres were organised in North Al Batinah alone (Times of Oman, 2021), and after the storm the Ministry of Education suspended classes in all public and private schools in the North and South Al Batinah governorates while recovery continued (Oman Observer, 2021). Schools in Sohar are therefore exposed to hazards that call for systematic disaster risk management, and they operate within a society in which Islamic norms are a principal source of public and professional ethics.

This situation raises a practical problem. Omani school leaders receive technical guidance on evacuation, closure, and continuity, but the decisions they actually face during a cyclone are rarely purely technical. A principal may have to decide whether to postpone examinations that parents and students regard as decisive, whether to allow a school building to be used as a shelter at the cost of weeks of disrupted teaching, or how far to relax ordinary rules of attendance and assessment for students whose homes were damaged. Such decisions involve trade-offs between goods that the community values, and in a Muslim-majority setting the language in which those trade-offs are understood and justified is often religious and legal rather than technical. When guidance does not speak that language, it risks being followed formally but not owned.

The central argument of this paper is that *maqasid al-shariah* and *al-qawa'id al-fiqhiyyah* provide more than moral encouragement for school safety. Together, they supply a coherent structure of objectives and decision rules that can be mapped onto the recognised phases of disaster management. The paper pursues three objectives: (a) to establish the conceptual compatibility between the *maqasid* and the goals of school disaster risk management; (b) to identify the legal maxims most relevant to each phase of disaster management and to translate them into school-level practices; and (c) to propose an integrated framework, illustrated with a Sohar scenario, together with propositions that can guide future empirical research.

The paper contributes to the literature in three ways. First, it moves the discussion of religion and disaster from the description of religious institutions and beliefs to the use of Islamic legal reasoning as a design principle for institutional practice. Second, it offers a phase-specific mapping that school leaders and policymakers can use directly in planning and training. Third, it provides a *shariah*-grounded justification for educational continuity, the second pillar of the CSSF, by linking it to the preservation of intellect (*hifz al-'aql*), a connection that has received little attention.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 School disaster risk management

Disaster management is commonly represented as a cycle of prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery (Wisner et al., 2004). The cycle model has well-known limitations, since phases overlap and recovery can itself create new vulnerability, but it remains the dominant organising scheme in policy and training because it links actions to time and responsibility. Wisner et al. (2004) also showed that disasters are not simply

natural events: they arise when hazards meet social conditions that make some groups more vulnerable than others.

The Sendai Framework consolidated this shift by moving the emphasis from managing disasters to managing risk. It set four priorities: understanding disaster risk, strengthening disaster risk governance, investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience, and enhancing preparedness for effective response and to "build back better" in recovery (UNISDR, 2015).

For the education sector, the CSSF 2022–2030 translates these priorities into an all-hazards, all-risks framework. Its foundation of enabling systems and policies supports three pillars. Pillar 1 concerns safer learning facilities, including site selection, design, construction, and maintenance. Pillar 2 concerns school safety and educational continuity management, including risk assessment, contingency planning, drills, and plans for continuing education when schools are disrupted. Pillar 3 concerns risk reduction and resilience education for learners and staff (GADRRRES, 2022). A key feature of the revised framework is that continuity of education is treated as part of safety, not as a separate concern.

Research on the role of schools in community resilience supports this integrated view. Ronan and Johnston (2005) argued that schools, youth, and families are central to building community resilience, because disaster education delivered through schools reaches households and because children can act as agents of preparedness rather than only as victims. Peek (2008) similarly called for approaches that recognise both the vulnerabilities and the capacities of children. These studies suggest that the effectiveness of school-based disaster risk reduction depends heavily on whether its messages are meaningful to the learners and families who receive them, a point that leads directly to the question of culture and religion.

2.2 Religion and disaster

Chester (2005) called for dialogue between theology and disaster studies, arguing that religious interpretations of disaster shape how communities respond and that disaster researchers ignore them at their cost. Later work by Chester et al. (2013) examined how Islamic thought has interpreted volcanic eruptions and earthquakes, showing that Muslim responses to hazards are diverse and cannot be reduced to a single theological attitude. Ghafory-Ashtiany (2009) likewise argued that Islamic teaching places a high value on human life and on the responsibility of people to protect themselves from earthquake risk.

Empirical work has shown that religion can operate in both directions. In the aftermath of the 2005 Pakistan earthquake, the mosque acted as a site of relief distribution, shelter, and social support across the response and recovery phases, even though its contribution was rarely recognised by formal actors (Cheema et al., 2014). In Padang, Indonesia, religious beliefs and practices helped survivors cope and mobilised community assistance after the 2009 earthquake, while the same study noted concerns that religion may lower risk perception and encourage fatalistic attitudes (Gianisa & Le De, 2018). Joakim and White (2015) found that religious beliefs, leaders, and networks shaped both response and recovery in Indonesia. In Agadir, Morocco, Paradise (2005) reported that many residents interpreted earthquakes in religious terms, an outlook that could reduce the perceived value of preparedness.

A smaller body of work has examined how Islamic teaching can be used to support disaster risk reduction. Adiyoso and Kanegae (2013) studied the role of Islamic teaching in disaster risk reduction in Banda Aceh and found that religious understanding could support, rather than obstruct, preparedness when properly framed. Aksa (2020) argued that the Qur'an and *hadith* do not instruct believers to be fatalistic about disaster and proposed knowledge (*al-'ilm*), effort (*ikhtiar*), and trust in God (*tawakkul*) as Islamic principles for disaster risk reduction. Fahm (2019) proposed a psycho-socio-spiritual model of Islamic disaster management, and Iskandar (2019) discussed mitigation as a form of anticipatory jurisprudence (*fiqh*).

This literature establishes that religion matters in disaster and that Islamic teaching can be read as supportive of preparedness. However, most studies either describe religious institutions and beliefs as social facts or offer general theological principles. They rarely ask whether a religious legal tradition offers a structured normative

framework that could guide the design of institutional disaster management systems, with specific rules linked to specific decisions. For Islam, the tradition of *maqasid* and legal maxims is well placed to answer that question, because it was developed precisely to guide practical judgement where explicit texts are silent.

2.3 Maqasid al-shariah and Islamic legal maxims

The theory of *maqasid al-shariah* holds that the rulings of Islamic law serve identifiable objectives that secure human welfare (*maslahah*). Al-Ghazali (1993) identified five essentials whose preservation is the purpose of the law: religion (*din*), life (*nafs*), intellect (*'aql*), progeny (*nasl*), and wealth (*mal*). Al-Shatibi (1997) systematised the theory by grouping the objectives into three levels: essentials (*daruriyyat*), without which life and order collapse; needs (*hajiyyat*), without which people suffer hardship; and embellishments (*tahsiniyyat*), which refine conduct and institutions. Ibn 'Abd al-Salam (1991) had earlier argued that the whole of the law is directed toward securing benefits and averting harms, and that jurists must weigh benefits and harms against one another when they conflict. Ibn 'Ashur (2006) extended the theory toward public and institutional welfare, and contemporary scholars have argued that the *maqasid* provide a systems-oriented basis for addressing new questions that classical jurisprudence did not anticipate (Auda, 2008; Kamali, 2008). The *maqasid* have already been applied as an evaluative framework in modern institutional fields such as corporate social responsibility (Dusuki & Abdullah, 2007), which shows their capacity to inform organisational practice.

Islamic legal maxims (*al-qawa'id al-fiqhiyyah*) are concise normative statements distilled from many particular rulings. They were collected by jurists such as al-Suyuti (1983) and Ibn Nujaym (1999), and a selection was codified in the opening articles of the Ottoman *Majallah*. Among the five universal maxims, the maxim that "harm must be eliminated" (*al-darar yuzal*) and the maxim that "hardship begets facilitation" (*al-mashaqqah tajlib al-taysir*) generate large families of subsidiary rules on risk, necessity, and priority (al-Zarqa, 1989). Al-Qarafi (n.d.) added the principle that means take the ruling of the ends they serve, which allows jurists to evaluate instruments and procedures by reference to the objectives they make possible.

Where the *maqasid* specify what must be protected, the maxims specify how to reason when protection requires trade-offs. This pairing of objectives and decision rules is what makes the tradition suitable as a method theory for disaster management.

2.4 Research gap

The review points to a clear gap. The disaster risk reduction literature has developed detailed frameworks for school safety but has given little attention to the normative reasoning of the communities that must implement them. The religion and disaster literature has recognised the importance of Islamic beliefs and institutions but has not translated Islamic legal reasoning into phase-specific guidance for schools. The *maqasid* literature has shown that the objectives of the law can inform modern institutional practice, but it has not been applied systematically to disaster risk management in education. No framework currently links the *maqasid*, specific legal maxims, the phases of disaster management, and the pillars of the CSSF in a single structure. This paper sets out to provide one.

METHODOLOGY

This is a conceptual paper. It does not report primary data. Conceptual papers contribute by bridging existing theories, proposing new relationships among constructs, and offering propositions that can guide empirical work (MacInnis, 2011). The paper follows the theory-synthesis approach described by Jaakkola (2020), in which a concept or phenomenon is explained by integrating previously separate bodies of knowledge into a new, higher-order framework. Here, the phenomenon is school disaster risk management. The domain theory is the international disaster risk reduction literature, represented by the disaster management cycle, the Sendai Framework, and the CSSF. The method theory, the lens through which the domain is reorganised, is the Islamic jurisprudential tradition of *maqasid al-shariah* and legal maxims.

Sources were selected in three groups. The first group consists of primary texts: verses of the Qur'an and Prophetic traditions (*hadith*) that bear directly on the preservation of life, preparation, consultation, trust, and

accountability. Prophetic traditions were drawn from the canonical collections of al-Bukhari, al-Tirmidhi, and Ibn Majah. The second group consists of classical and modern works on *maqasid* and legal maxims, including al-Ghazali's *al-Mustasfa*, Ibn 'Abd al-Salam's *Qawa'id al-Ahkam*, al-Qarafi's *al-Furuq*, al-Shatibi's *al-Muwafaqat*, Ibn 'Ashur's *Maqasid al-Shari'ah al-Islamiyyah*, the *al-Ashbah wa al-Naza'ir* works of al-Suyuti and Ibn Nujaym, the Ottoman *Majallat al-Ahkam al-'Adliyyah*, and contemporary expositions by al-Zarqa (1989), Auda (2008), and Kamali (2008). The third group consists of international disaster risk reduction documents and peer-reviewed empirical studies on religion and disaster, with priority given to studies from Muslim-majority settings.

Legal maxims were retained for the framework when they met four criteria. First, the maxim had to be widely accepted across the Sunni schools of law, rather than specific to one school. Second, it had to be recorded in a recognised compilation, either the *Majallah* or the *al-Ashbah wa al-Naza'ir* tradition, or, in the case of principles of legal theory (*usul al-fiqh*), in a standard work such as al-Ghazali's *al-Mustasfa* or al-Qarafi's *al-Furuq*. Third, it had to have a clear grounding in the Qur'an or *hadith*. Fourth, it had to bear on a decision that school actors actually face, such as whether to invest in prevention, how to prioritise under emergency conditions, or when to relax ordinary rules. Maxims that met the first three criteria but had no clear application to school decisions were excluded. The paper also distinguishes between legal maxims in the strict sense (*qawa'id fiqhiyyah*) and principles of legal theory (*qawa'id usuliyyah*). For example, the rule that "whatever is necessary to fulfil an obligation is itself obligatory" is a principle of legal theory discussed by al-Ghazali (1993), not an article of the *Majallah*, and it is identified as such in the framework.

The analysis proceeded in three steps, summarised in Table 1. First, the objectives of school disaster risk management were compared with the five essential *maqasid* and their three levels to establish their correspondence. Second, the retained maxims were assigned to the disaster phase in which their decision logic is most operative, and each assignment was translated into concrete school-level practices. Third, the resulting mapping was organised into a three-layer framework, aligned with the CSSF, and examined against an illustrative scenario to test its internal coherence and practical usefulness.

Table 1. Analytical procedure of the theory synthesis

Step	Purpose	Main sources	Output
1. Objective correspondence	Compare the goals of school disaster risk management with the five essential *maqasid*, their three levels, and the criteria for prioritising them	al-Ghazali (1993); Ibn 'Abd al-Salam (1991); al-Shatibi (1997); Ibn 'Ashur (2006); UNISDR (2015); GADRRRES (2022)	Layer 1: *maqasid* as ranked objectives of school safety (Table 4)
2. Maxim screening, classification, and reconciliation	Retain maxims meeting the four criteria; separate established meaning from proposed application; resolve tensions between maxims	*Majallah*; al-Suyuti (1983); Ibn Nujaym (1999); al-Qarafi (n.d.); al-Zarqa (1989); Qur'an and *hadith*	Classification of sources (Table 2); reconciliation of competing principles (Table 3)
3. Phase assignment and integration	Assign maxims to disaster phases, align the result with the CSSF and Oman's emergency management system, and examine it against a hazard scenario	GADRRRES (2022); NCEM (2024); Directorate General of Meteorology (n.d.); empirical studies on religion and disaster	Layer 2 mapping (Table 5); Layer 3 outcome; illustrative application; propositions P1–P5

To strengthen the rigour of the synthesis, the mapping was checked in two ways. Each maxim was traced to its textual basis and its standard formulation in the classical compilations, so that the framework does not rely on paraphrase alone. The phase assignments were also checked against the CSSF to ensure that every pillar of the international framework is matched by at least one normative principle. The framework should nonetheless be read as a structured proposal for further validation, not as an empirically verified model.

3.1 From established principles to proposed applications

The tradition draws on texts and maxims that were formulated for other contexts. Several of the Qur'anic verses used here were revealed in a military setting (al-Anfal 8:60; al-Nisa' 4:71), and the maxim on the conduct of the ruler (*Majallah*, art. 58) concerns public authority rather than school leaders. To keep the established content of the tradition separate from the contribution of this paper, each source was treated in three steps. First, its original context and established juristic meaning were identified. Second, the general meaning or ratio (*'illah* or *ma'na*) on which jurists themselves had relied was identified. Two recognised principles of legal theory permit this step: that "the lesson lies in the generality of the wording, not in the specificity of the occasion" (*al-'ibrah bi-'umum al-lafz la bi-khusus al-sabab*), and al-Shatibi's (1997) concept of verifying the ratio of a ruling in new cases (*tahqiq al-manat*). Third, the ratio was applied to a school-level decision, and the application was labelled as a proposal of this paper rather than as an established ruling.

The sources were also classified by the type of use made of them. A source is *normative* when jurists already apply it as a general rule, such as the prohibition of harm (*la darar wa la dirar*). It is *analogical* when the paper extends an established rule to a new actor, as when the duty of the ruler is extended to the school principal. It is *illustrative* when it offers a model of conduct rather than a legal ruling, as in the narrative of the Prophet Yusuf or the precedent of the Caliph 'Umar. Table 2 summarises this classification for the main sources. The distinction matters because the framework's normative claims are only as strong as the type of evidence behind them, and illustrative sources are not used to establish obligations.

Table 2. Established juristic meaning and proposed application of the main sources

Source	Original context or established meaning	Proposed application in this framework	Type of use
La darar wa la dirar (Ibn Majah, no. 2341); *al-darar yuzal* (arts. 19–20)	General prohibition of causing or tolerating harm; basis of a universal maxim	Duty to identify and reduce foreseeable hazards in school	Normative
al-Baqarah 2:195	Revealed concerning abandoning spending in the cause of God; cited by jurists against exposing oneself to destruction	Prohibition of avoidable exposure of students and staff to danger	Normative (general wording)
al-Anfal 8:60; al-Nisa' 4:71	Military preparation and precaution	General duty of preparedness and precaution	Analogical (general wording)
Ma la yatimm al-wajib illa bihi fa-huwa wajib	Principle of legal theory (al-Ghazali); limited to means within the capacity of the obligated person	Plans, drills, and training as obligatory means of protecting life	Normative (usuli principle)
Al-daf' aqwa min al-raf'	Legal impediments prevent an effect from arising more strongly than they remove it	Priority of prevention and mitigation over later remedy	Analogical
Tasarruf al-imam manut bi-al-maslahah (art. 58)	Conduct of the public authority; likened by al-Shafi'i to the guardian of an orphan	Welfare-bound authority of the school principal	Analogical
Al-mashaqqah tajlib al-taysir (art. 17); *al-hajah tunazzal manzilat al-darurah* (art. 32)	Relief from genuine hardship; widespread need treated as necessity	Flexible assessment and continuity measures after disaster	Normative
Yusuf 12:47–49; 'Umar and the plague (al-Bukhari, no. 5729)	Qur'anic narrative; practice of a Companion	Models of anticipatory planning and consultative leadership	Illustrative

Note. Article numbers refer to the Ottoman *Majallah*. "Normative" sources are applied as general rules by jurists; "analogical" uses extend an established rule to a new actor or context; "illustrative" sources model conduct and are not used to establish obligations.

The *hadith* evidence was treated with similar care. The tradition "there should be neither harm nor reciprocating harm" is transmitted by Ibn Majah (no. 2341) and was graded *hasan* by al-Nawawi (n.d., no. 32) on the strength of its multiple chains. The tradition "tie it and trust" (al-Tirmidhi, no. 2517) was described by al-Tirmidhi himself as *gharib*. It is used here because its meaning is confirmed by the Qur'anic command to "take your precautions" (al-Nisa' 4:71), not as independent proof of an obligation.

3.2 Reconciling competing principles

Legal maxims do not operate in isolation, and several of them pull in different directions. A framework that lists maxims without showing how such tensions are resolved would give school leaders conflicting guidance. During the framework's development, every pair of maxims assigned to the same phase was examined for possible conflict, and each conflict was resolved by criteria drawn from the tradition itself. Ibn 'Abd al-Salam (1991) set out the main criteria for weighing benefits and harms: the rank of the interest at stake, the magnitude of the benefit or harm, the degree of certainty that it will occur, and whether it affects the public or only individuals. Al-Shatibi (1997) added that a complementary interest is dropped when pursuing it would defeat the essential interest it serves.

Table 3 sets out the main tensions identified and the way each was reconciled. Three examples show the logic. First, the maxim that "averting harm takes precedence over securing benefit" is limited by the principle that a clearly preponderant benefit is not abandoned for a slight or remote harm (Ibn 'Abd al-Salam, 1991; al-Zarqa, 1989). It therefore requires evacuation when the danger is real, but it does not require that every lesson be cancelled at the first sign of rain. Second, the maxim that "necessity permits what is prohibited" is limited by the maxim that "necessity does not invalidate the right of another" (*al-idtirar la yubtil haqq al-ghayr*; *Majallah*, art. 33). Staff may break a neighbour's gate to evacuate students, but the owner retains a claim to compensation. Third, the maxim that "a private harm is tolerated to avert a general harm" is limited by the maxim that "harm is not removed by an equal harm" (*al-darar la yuzal bi-mithlih*; *Majallah*, art. 25). A school may be used as a shelter, but not in a way that exposes its own students to a danger equal to the one being averted.

Table 3. Competing principles and their reconciliation in the framework

Principle	Competing or limiting principle	Criterion of reconciliation	Outcome for school decisions
Dar' al-mafasid awla min jalb al-masalih (art. 30)	A clearly preponderant benefit is not abandoned for a slight or remote harm (Ibn 'Abd al-Salam)	Magnitude and probability of harm	Evacuate when danger is real or probable; do not cancel learning for remote risk
Al-darurat tubih al-mahzurat (art. 21)	*Al-idtirar la yubtil haqq al-ghayr* (art. 33); *al-darurat tuqaddar bi-qadariha* (art. 22)	Rights of others and proportionality	Emergency measures permitted, limited in time, with compensation for others' losses
Yutahammal al-darar al-khass li-daf' al-darar al-'amm (art. 26)	*Al-darar la yuzal bi-mithlih* (art. 25)	Scope and relative magnitude of harms	School may serve as shelter, but not at equal risk to its own students
Precedence of life over property	Property essential to survival (e.g., shelter supplies); certainty of the threat	Level of interest and degree of certainty (al-Shatibi; Ibn 'Abd al-Salam)	Protect assets only when doing so does not delay evacuation or add risk
Al-mashaqqah tajlib al-taysir (art. 17)	Maintenance of educational standards; *al-maysur la yasqut bi-al-ma'sur*	Genuineness and duration of hardship	Temporary, proportionate flexibility; partial learning rather than none
Discretion of the principal (art. 58)	Obedience to authority (al-Nisa' 4:59); *hukm al-hakim yarfa' al-khilaf*	Hierarchy of lawful authority	National directives prevail; *maqasid* guide decisions within remaining discretion
Tawakkul (reliance on God)	Duty of preparation (*i'qilha wa tawakkal*)	Sequence: means first, reliance after	Preparation is not replaced by trust; trust accompanies it

Note. Article numbers refer to the Ottoman *Majallah*. Source: Authors' synthesis.

These reconciliations show that the framework does not offer mechanical rules. It offers structured presumptions, together with the conditions under which those presumptions yield. Cases that cannot be resolved by these criteria, or that raise questions of personal religious practice, should be referred to the competent religious authorities rather than settled by the school.

The Proposed Framework

The framework has three layers (Figure 1). Layer 1 sets the objectives, Layer 2 supplies phase-specific decision rules, and Layer 3 specifies the outcome in terms compatible with the CSSF. Although Figure 1 presents the four phases in sequence, lessons from the recovery phase return to prevention, so that the framework describes a learning cycle rather than a fixed sequence.

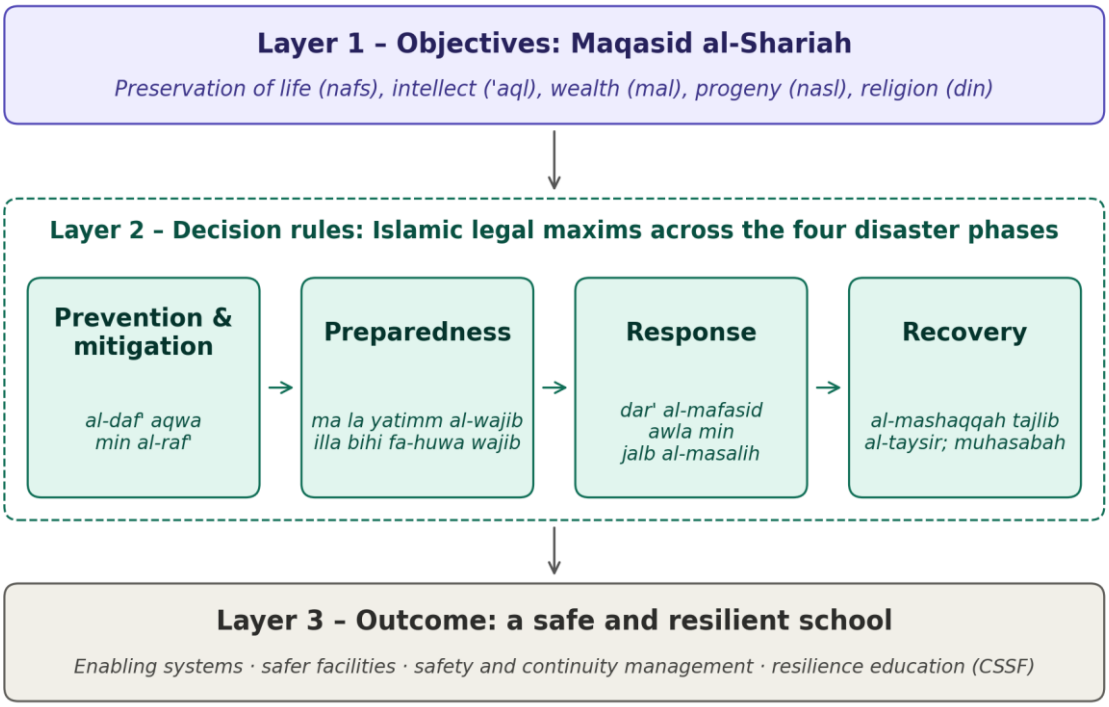


Figure 1. The integrated maqasid–legal maxims framework for school disaster risk management

4.1 Layer 1: The maqasid as the objectives of school safety

The preservation of life (*hifz al-nafs*) is the primary objective of school disaster risk management and corresponds directly to the first CSSF goal of protecting learners and staff from death and injury. The Qur'an treats the saving of one life as the saving of all humanity (al-Ma'idah 5:32) and prohibits exposing oneself to destruction (al-Baqarah 2:195). In a school, this objective extends beyond students to teachers, administrative staff, drivers, and visitors, and it requires special attention to those who are least able to protect themselves, such as young children and students with disabilities.

The preservation of intellect (*hifz al-'aql*) is usually discussed in terms of prohibiting intoxicants. The classical theory, however, already contains a positive dimension. Al-Shatibi (1997) explained that each essential is preserved in two ways: by establishing and sustaining it (*min janib al-wujud*) and by warding off what would disrupt or destroy it (*min janib al-'adam*). The prohibition of intoxicants belongs to the second way. Learning, which develops the faculty of reason and equips it to function, belongs to the first. The first revealed word of the Qur'an is the command to read (al-'Alaq 96:1), and schooling is the principal institutional means through which modern societies develop the intellect of the young.

Contemporary *maqasid* scholarship has made this positive dimension explicit. Ibn 'Ashur (2006) shifted the emphasis of the theory from the protection of individuals toward the welfare of society and its institutions. Auda (2008) argued that the classical vocabulary of "preservation" should be extended to "development", and he expressed the preservation of intellect in contemporary terms such as the propagation of scientific thinking and travelling to seek knowledge. Al-Najjar (2008) similarly proposed reading the *maqasid* in terms of their developmental as well as protective dimensions, and Kamali (2008) argued that the objectives must be understood in light of present-day needs.

On this basis, the paper proposes that the interruption of education after a disaster is a harm to *'aql*. The level of that harm requires precision. A closure of a few days falls within the level of needs (*hajiyyat*): it causes hardship but does not destroy the intellect. A prolonged and total loss of schooling, particularly for young children whose basic literacy depends on it, approaches the level of essentials. This gradation is supported by the maxim that "a need, whether general or specific, is treated as a necessity" (*al-hajah tunazzal manzilat al-darurah*; *Majallah*, art. 32), which applies when a need is widespread and its denial would cause serious harm. The proposal is consistent with Oman's Basic Statute of the State, which declares Islamic *shariah* the basis of legislation (art. 2) and education a right of every citizen (art. 16) (Basic Statute of the State, 2021). It provides a *shariah*-based justification for the CSSF's insistence on educational continuity (Pillar 2) and resilience education (Pillar 3), and it is one of the distinctive claims of this framework. The claim is offered as a contemporary application of established theory, not as a ruling found in the classical texts.

The preservation of wealth (*hifz al-mal*) covers school buildings, equipment, and records, which are public trusts (*amanah*). The Qur'an commands that trusts be rendered to those to whom they are due (al-Nisa' 4:58), and a school leader who neglects the maintenance of public property fails in that duty. The preservation of progeny (*hifz al-nasl*) is served by protecting children as the next generation and by the psychosocial protection of families affected by disaster, including the safe reunification of children with their parents after an emergency. The preservation of religion (*hifz al-din*) is served when disaster management is conducted as an act of responsibility before God, when fatalistic misreadings of faith are corrected, and when the school's religious life, including communal prayer and spiritual support, is sustained through crisis.

Prioritising the maqasid

The ranking of the *maqasid* is a matter of juristic reasoning, not a fixed formula. Al-Ghazali (1993) listed the essentials in the order of religion, life, intellect, progeny, and wealth, and later jurists differed on the order and on whether honour (*'ird*) should be added. The framework therefore does not rely on a single list. Its claim that life takes precedence over property in a school emergency rests on more specific evidence. Established rulings permit a person under threat of death to eat what is otherwise forbidden (al-Baqarah 2:173) and relax the forms of worship for the sick and the endangered, which shows that the law gives priority to the preservation of life over many other considerations when life is genuinely at risk. Property, by contrast, is protected chiefly at the levels of needs and embellishments, and its loss can usually be compensated.

Three contextual considerations qualify this precedence. First, the level of the interest matters as much as its category. An essential interest in property, such as the stored food and water that make a building usable as a shelter, may outweigh a lesser interest in the comfort of persons. Second, the degree of certainty matters. Ibn 'Abd al-Salam (1991) distinguished harms that are certain or highly probable from those that are merely possible or imagined. Precedence of life applies with full force when the danger to persons is real or probable. When it is remote, reasonable measures to protect records or equipment are permitted, provided they do not delay evacuation or expose anyone to added risk. Third, scope matters. A harm that affects the whole school community weighs more than one that affects a single individual. With these qualifications, the rule remains clear in its central application: a principal who delays evacuation in the face of a probable danger to protect equipment has inverted the order of the *maqasid*.

Al-Shatibi's three levels also allow school actions to be prioritised by their weight. Table 4 illustrates how the levels apply to school disaster risk management. Actions at the level of essentials, such as structural safety and evacuation, are non-negotiable. Actions at the level of needs, such as flexible assessment and alternative

learning, remove hardship and make continuity possible. Actions at the level of embellishments, such as well-designed communication materials and commemorations of the event, improve the quality of the school's response but may be deferred when resources are scarce.

Table 4. Levels of the maqasid applied to school disaster risk management

Level	Meaning (al-Shatibi)	Examples in school disaster risk management	Priority under scarce resources
Essentials (*daruriyyat*)	Interests without which life and order collapse	Structural safety of buildings; evacuation routes and drills; early warning; first aid; protection of students with disabilities; safe reunification of children with families; prolonged loss of basic schooling	Secured first; precedence applies with full force when the threat is real or probable
Needs (*hajiyyat*)	Interests whose absence causes hardship	Short-term educational continuity through remote or blended learning; flexible assessment and timetables; psychosocial support; protection of records and equipment	Secured once essentials are met; a widespread need may be treated as a necessity (art. 32)
Embellishments (*tahsiniyyat*)	Interests that refine conduct and institutions	Well-designed communication materials; commemoration of the event; recognition of volunteers; improvements to the learning environment during rebuilding	Pursued when resources allow; dropped if they would compromise a higher interest

Source: Authors' synthesis based on al-Shatibi (1997), Ibn 'Abd al-Salam (1991), and GADRRRES (2022).

4.2 Layer 2: Legal maxims across the disaster phases

Table 5 summarises the mapping of legal maxims onto the four disaster phases. The discussion below explains the reasoning for each phase.

Table 5. Mapping of maqasid and Islamic legal maxims onto the phases of school disaster risk management

Phase	Primary maqasid	Governing maxims and textual basis	School-level practices	CSSF link
Prevention and mitigation	Life; wealth	*al-daf' aqwa min al-raf'* (by analogy); *al-darar yuzal* (arts. 19–20); *al-darar yudfa' bi-qadr al-imkan* (art. 31); *la darar wa la dirar*; al-Baqarah 2:195; al-Taghabun 64:16	Hazard mapping; safe siting and structural checks; drainage; safe storage of flammable materials; back-up of records; maintenance	Pillar 1
Preparedness	Life; religion	*ma la yatimm al-wajib illa bihi fa-huwa wajib* (usuli principle, within capacity); means take the ruling of ends (al-Qarafi); al-Anfal 8:60; al-Nisa' 4:71; *i'qilha wa tawakkal*; Yusuf 12:47–49 (illustrative)	Emergency plans; drills; staff training; early warning and parent communication; individual plans for students with disabilities	Pillar 2
Response	Life before wealth (contextual)	*dar' al-mafasid awla min jalb al-masalih* (art. 30); *al-darar al-khass* tolerated for *al-darar al-'amm* (art. 26), limited by art. 25; lesser harm (art. 27); *al-darurat tubih al-mahzurat* / *tuqaddar bi-qadariha* (arts. 21–22), limited by art. 33; *tasarruf al-imam manut bi-al-maslahah* (art. 58, by analogy); al-Nisa' 4:59; 'Umar and the plague (illustrative)	Implementation of national closure directives; evacuation over lessons and property; postponement of examinations; school as shelter; bounded emergency authority; consultative decisions	Pillar 2; Foundation
Recovery	Intellect; progeny; religion	*al-mashaqqah tajlib al-taysir* (art. 17); *idha daqa al-amr ittasa'a* (art. 18); *al-hajah tunazzal manzilat al-darurah* (art. 32); *al-maysur la yasqut bi-al-ma'sur*; al-Baqarah	Educational continuity; flexible assessment; psychosocial support; participatory after-action review feeding into prevention	Pillars 2 and 3

Phase	Primary maqasid	Governing maxims and textual basis	School-level practices	CSSF link
		2:185; al-Hajj 22:78; *muhasabah* (al-Hashr 59:18); *shura* (Al 'Imran 3:159); al-Ra'd 13:11		

Note. Article numbers refer to the Ottoman Majallah; see Table 2 for the type of use of each source.

Prevention and mitigation

The governing principle of this phase is that prevention is stronger than removal (*al-daf' aqwa min al-raf'*), a maxim recorded in the *al-Ashbah wa al-Naza'ir* tradition (al-Suyuti, 1983). In its original setting, the maxim concerns legal impediments, which operate more strongly in preventing a legal effect from arising than in removing it once it is established. Its application to physical hazards is an analogical extension proposed in this paper, and it rests on the general meaning of the maxim reinforced by the prohibition of harm. It is supported by the Prophetic tradition that "there should be neither harm nor reciprocating harm" (*la darar wa la dirar*) (Ibn Majah, no. 2341), from which the universal maxim *al-darar yuzal* is derived (*Majallah*, arts. 19–20). A corollary is that harm is to be averted as far as possible (*al-darar yudfa' bi-qadr al-imkan*; *Majallah*, art. 31), which echoes the Qur'anic instruction to "be mindful of God as much as you are able" (al-Taghabun 64:16). Harm must be removed after it occurs, but it is better still to prevent it from occurring. The verse of al-Baqarah 2:195 was revealed concerning the abandonment of spending in the cause of God, but jurists have long cited its general wording against exposing oneself to avoidable destruction, which is the sense in which it is used here.

For schools, this justifies investment in safe site selection, structural soundness, drainage for heavy rainfall, safe storage of flammable materials, and regular maintenance, even when no disaster is imminent. The qualifier "as far as possible" is important. It recognises that schools operate under budget constraints and cannot eliminate every risk, but it also rules out inaction where reasonable measures are available. Neglecting known hazards can therefore be understood as a failure of the duty to avert foreseeable harm, not merely an administrative lapse.

Preparedness

Preparedness rests on the command to prepare "whatever you are able" (al-Anfal 8:60) and on the Qur'anic instruction to "take your precautions" (al-Nisa' 4:71). The Prophetic answer to a man who asked whether he should tie his camel or trust in God, "tie it and trust" (*i'qilha wa tawakkal*) (al-Tirmidhi, no. 2517), addresses directly the risk of fatalism that disaster research has observed in religious communities (Gianisa & Le De, 2018; Paradise, 2005). Reliance on God (*tawakkul*) does not replace preparation; it presupposes it (Aksa, 2020). Both verses were revealed in a military context; their use here relies on the general wording of the command, in line with the principle that the lesson lies in the generality of the wording. The account of the Prophet Yusuf's fifteen-year plan of storage for a coming famine (Yusuf 12:47–49) offers a Qur'anic model of evidence-based anticipation: a warning was interpreted, a plan was made, resources were stored, and the community survived the crisis. The narrative is used as an illustrative model, not as a source of legal obligation.

The legal principle that turns preparedness from a recommendation into an obligation is the rule that "whatever is necessary to fulfil an obligation is itself obligatory" (*ma la yatimm al-wajib illa bihi fa-huwa wajib*). It is reinforced by al-Qarafi's (n.d.) principle that means take the ruling of their ends. If protecting students' lives is obligatory, then the means without which that protection cannot be achieved, such as emergency plans, trained staff, early warning systems, parent communication channels, and regular evacuation drills, are also obligatory. The principle has a limit that jurists recognised: it applies only to means that lie within the capacity of the person who bears the obligation (al-Ghazali, 1993). A school is therefore obliged to provide the plans, drills, and training that it controls, while structural reconstruction or early warning infrastructure falls to the education directorate and national authorities. This reasoning gives school leaders a clear normative basis for making drills and training non-negotiable, and for resisting the common tendency to cancel drills when the academic calendar is crowded.

Response

The response phase requires rapid decisions under uncertainty, often involving trade-offs. The maxim that "averting harm takes precedence over securing benefit" (*dar' al-mafasid awla min jalb al-masalih*; *Majallah*, art. 30) directs school leaders to prioritise evacuation and shelter over continuing lessons, completing examinations, or protecting property. The maxim that "a private harm is tolerated to avert a general harm" (*yutahammal al-darar al-khass li-daf' al-darar al-'amm*; *Majallah*, art. 26) justifies, for example, requisitioning a school building as a community shelter despite the disruption to the school. Where every available option carries some harm, the maxim that "the greater harm is removed by the lesser harm" (*al-darar al-ashadd yuzal bi-al-darar al-akhaff*; *Majallah*, art. 27) guides the choice of the least harmful option.

Necessity permits what is ordinarily prohibited (*al-darurat tubih al-mahzurat*; *Majallah*, art. 21), which covers actions such as breaking doors to evacuate or combining prayers during an emergency. Its counterpart, that necessity is measured by its extent (*al-darurat tuqaddar bi-qadariha*; *Majallah*, art. 22), prevents emergency powers from becoming open-ended.

The authority of the school leader is framed by the maxim that "the conduct of the leader over subjects is bound by their welfare" (*tasarruf al-imam 'ala al-ra'iyyah manut bi-al-maslahah*; *Majallah*, art. 58), read together with the Prophetic statement that "each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock" (al-Bukhari, no. 893). The maxim was formulated for public authority, but al-Suyuti (1983) recorded al-Shafi'i's statement that the position of the ruler in relation to his subjects is like that of a guardian in relation to an orphan, and jurists have applied the same reasoning to other holders of delegated authority, such as guardians and administrators of endowments. Its application to the school principal, who acts both as a delegate of public authority and in place of parents during the school day, is an analogical extension. This maxim both empowers and constrains. It gives the principal authority to act decisively in the interest of students, but it makes every decision answerable to their welfare rather than to convenience, reputation, or personal preference. Finally, the precedent of the Caliph 'Umar, who turned back from entering Syria during a plague after consulting his companions and hearing the Prophetic instruction not to enter a land struck by plague (al-Bukhari, no. 5729), shows consultative, risk-avoiding leadership in a public emergency.

Recovery

Recovery is governed by the maxim that "hardship begets facilitation" (*al-mashaqqah tajlib al-taysir*; *Majallah*, art. 17), grounded in the verses "God intends ease for you and does not intend hardship" (al-Baqarah 2:185) and "He has not placed upon you any hardship in religion" (al-Hajj 22:78). A related maxim holds that "when a matter becomes narrow, it widens" (*idha daqa al-amr ittasa'a*; *Majallah*, art. 18). In school terms, these principles justify flexible timetables, adjusted assessment, alternative learning modalities, and psychosocial support for affected students and staff. These measures make the continuity of education (*hifz al-'aql*) achievable in practice. The maxim that "what is attainable is not abandoned because of what is unattainable" (*al-maysur la yasqut bi-al-ma'sur*; al-Suyuti, 1983) adds that, when full schooling is impossible, partial learning should still be provided rather than abandoned.

Recovery is also the phase of learning. The Qur'anic instruction "let every soul look to what it has sent forth for tomorrow" (al-Hashr 59:18) grounds the practice of self-accountability (*muhasabah*), and the command to consult (Al 'Imran 3:159; al-Shura 42:38) grounds participatory after-action reviews that involve teachers, parents, and students. The verse that "God does not change the condition of a people until they change what is within themselves" (al-Ra'd 13:11) adds that improvement after disaster depends on the community's own effort. Lessons from the review feed back into prevention, closing the cycle and embodying the Sendai principle of building back better.

4.3 Cross-cutting principles

Several principles operate across all phases rather than within one. The first is trust (*amanah*): the safety of students is a trust placed in the school by parents and by society, and the whole framework can be read as an

elaboration of how that trust is fulfilled. The second is consultation (*shura*), which applies to planning, emergency decisions, and post-event review alike, and which supports the participatory governance emphasised in the CSSF foundation. The third is the maxim that "custom is authoritative" (*al-'adah muhakkamah*; *Majallah*, art. 36). This maxim allows the framework to incorporate local practices and knowledge, such as traditional understanding of *wadi* flooding in Oman, provided they serve the objectives of the law. It also allows national technical standards to be treated as binding custom within the school system. The fourth is capacity: the Qur'an states that "God does not burden a soul beyond its capacity" (al-Baqarah 2:286), which reminds policymakers that obligations placed on schools must be matched by the resources needed to fulfil them.

4.4 Layer 3: The safe and resilient school

The outcome of the framework is a school that protects life and property, sustains learning, and builds the risk awareness of its community. This outcome corresponds to the CSSF foundation and three pillars. The enabling systems and policies correspond to the leader's duty of *maslahah*-bound governance and to consultation. Safer learning facilities correspond to prevention under *al-darar yuzal* and to the preservation of life and wealth. Safety and continuity management correspond to preparedness, response, and the continuity dimension of *hifz al-'aql*. Resilience education corresponds to the positive duty to develop the intellect and to the correction of fatalistic attitudes. The framework does not replace the CSSF. It gives school communities in Muslim-majority settings a normative language, drawn from their own tradition, for owning its goals.

4.5 Relationship with administrative authority and national regulation

The framework does not create a parallel source of authority within the school. In Oman, emergency management is coordinated by the National Committee for Emergency Management (NCEM), whose current name was set by Royal Decree 5/2020. The national system is organised into sectors led by designated agencies; for example, the Ministry of Social Development leads the shelter and relief sector, and the Civil Aviation Authority leads early warning (National Committee for Emergency Management [NCEM], 2024). Decisions to suspend classes or move them online during heavy rain follow national guidelines that set rainfall thresholds by governorate and assign the decision to the national emergency management committee (Gulf News, 2024). The school principal implements these decisions; he or she does not replace them.

The tradition itself supports this arrangement. The Qur'an commands obedience to those in authority (al-Nisa' 4:59), and the maxim that "the decision of the competent authority settles disagreement" (*hukm al-hakim yarfa' al-khilaf*), discussed by al-Qarafi (n.d.), means that once the authority has issued a lawful directive, the school is bound by it even where its own assessment differs. The maxim that "custom is authoritative" (*Majallah*, art. 36) allows national technical standards to be treated as binding within the school system. The framework therefore operates at three points: it gives a normative reason to comply with national directives; it guides decisions within the discretion that directives leave to schools, such as the timing of drills, the content of parent communication, and the arrangements for continuity of learning; and it provides a language in which the school can explain official decisions to its community. Because Oman's Basic Statute names Islamic *shariah* as the basis of legislation, the framework's principles are consistent with, rather than external to, the national legal order.

Two further constraints shape implementation. The first is capacity. Schools differ in staffing, budget, buildings, and access to training, and the Qur'anic principle that no soul is burdened beyond its capacity (al-Baqarah 2:286) means that obligations placed on schools must be matched by resources from the directorate and ministry. The second is religious diversity. Oman's Muslim population includes Ibadi, Sunni, and Shi'i communities, and many private schools enrol students and employ staff of other faiths. The maxims used here rest on Qur'anic and Prophetic texts shared across the Muslim schools, but their formulations are drawn mainly from Sunni compilations, and their Ibadi counterparts deserve separate study. The framework protects every person in the school, since the Qur'anic statement on saving a life (al-Ma'idah 5:32) refers to any human soul. It is a resource for the reasoning of decision-makers and for communication with Muslim families; it is not a requirement that non-Muslim students or staff adopt religious practices, consistent with the principle that "there is no compulsion in religion" (al-Baqarah 2:256).

Illustrative Application: A Cyclone Warning In Sohar

The following hypothetical scenario is not an empirical case. It shows how the framework could structure the decisions of a school leader. Suppose the national meteorological authority issues a warning, 48 hours in advance, that a tropical cyclone is expected to make landfall near Sohar, with heavy rain, flash flooding, and strong winds. A government school in the *wilayah* has 900 students, including twelve students with physical or sensory disabilities. Its ground floor is prone to flooding, and an examination week is scheduled to begin in three days.

Prevention and mitigation. In the months before the warning, the framework would already have required the school to identify its flood-prone areas, clear drainage channels, relocate records and equipment above flood level, back up digital records, and report structural weaknesses to the education directorate. These actions follow *al-daf' aqwa min al-raf'*: the cheapest and most effective moment to deal with the flood is before the cyclone season. Under *al-darar yudfa' bi-qadr al-imkan*, the school would have prioritised the measures it could afford within its budget and documented the risks it could not address, so that the directorate is informed.

Preparedness. When the warning is issued, the school activates its emergency plan. Because the plan, drills, and a parent communication channel are treated as obligatory means under *ma la yatimm al-wajib illa bihi*, the school can notify families, confirm transport arrangements, and brief staff within hours. The plan includes individual arrangements for students with disabilities, since the preservation of life applies to every student and the most vulnerable require the most careful preparation.

Response. The decision to close schools is taken by the national emergency management authorities, not by the principal. Once the authorities order school closures or the use of the building as a shelter, the principal's decision is guided by *dar' al-mafasid awla min jalb al-masalih*. The examinations are postponed, since their benefit does not justify exposing students and staff to risk. The use of the building as a shelter is accepted under the principle of tolerating a private harm to avert a general one. If heavy rain arrives before all students have been collected, staff may take emergency measures, such as moving students to an upper floor normally closed to them, under *al-darurat tubih al-mahzurat*, but only for as long as the danger lasts. The principal's discretion is bounded by *maslahah*, and decisions are taken in consultation with the directorate and the school safety committee rather than alone.

Recovery. After the event, the principle of *al-mashaqqah tajlib al-taysir* justifies a revised examination schedule, temporary remote or blended learning for students whose homes were damaged, and counselling support for students and staff. The school does not simply wait for normal conditions to return; it actively seeks ways to continue learning, because the interruption of education is itself a harm to *'aql*. A structured *muhasabah* review, conducted with staff and parent representatives under the principle of *shura*, identifies what worked and what failed. Its recommendations, such as raising the level of electrical installations or improving the parent messaging system, are incorporated into the next year's prevention plan.

The scenario shows that the framework does not introduce new technical procedures. It organises existing good practice under objectives and decision rules that are meaningful to the school community, and it provides a principled basis for resolving the trade-offs that technical guidelines leave to discretion. The scenario demonstrates conceptual applicability only. Whether schools that adopt the framework actually perform better in a real event is an empirical question, addressed in Section 6.4.

DISCUSSION

6.1 Theoretical implications

The framework makes three theoretical contributions. First, it demonstrates that Islamic legal reasoning can serve as a method theory for disaster management, not only as a source of motivation. The *maqasid* specify protected interests and their ranking, and the legal maxims supply decision rules for trade-offs under uncertainty.

This combination parallels, in structure, the objectives and decision criteria of formal risk management, but it is expressed in a vocabulary that carries moral authority for Muslim practitioners.

Second, the framework offers a response to the concern that religion encourages fatalism in the face of disaster (Paradise, 2005; Gianisa & Le De, 2018). Within the tradition analysed here, preparation is itself a religious obligation, and neglect of foreseeable risk is a failure of duty. Positioning *tawakkul* after preparation (*i'qilha wa tawakkal*) rather than in place of it gives educators a theologically sound way to counter fatalistic attitudes among students and parents. This extends the argument of Aksa (2020), who proposed knowledge, effort, and trust as principles of disaster risk reduction, by grounding the obligation of effort in specific legal maxims and assigning those maxims to specific phases and decisions.

Third, the framework extends the application of the *maqasid* to a new institutional field. Previous work has used the *maqasid* to evaluate the conduct of businesses and financial institutions (Dusuki & Abdullah, 2007). This paper shows that the same reasoning can guide public-sector institutions such as schools, where the protected interests include not only life and property but also the intellectual development of children. The reading of educational continuity as a requirement of *hifz al-'aql* gives the *maqasid* a positive, developmental dimension that is often absent from discussions that treat the preservation of intellect mainly as a prohibition.

6.2 Relationship to existing literature

The framework builds on, but differs from, earlier studies of religion and disaster. Studies of the mosque in Pakistan and Indonesia (Cheema et al., 2014; Gianisa & Le De, 2018) and of religious networks (Joakim & White, 2015) showed that religious institutions mobilise resources and support. The present framework addresses a different question: not what religious institutions do during disasters, but how religious legal reasoning can shape the decisions of secular-public institutions such as government schools. It also complements studies of Islamic teaching and disaster risk reduction in Aceh (Adiyoso & Kanegae, 2013) by moving from general teaching to specific decision rules.

6.3 Practical implications

For school leaders, the phase-by-maxim mapping can be used as a checklist in emergency planning and as a set of justifications when defending decisions to parents and communities. A principal who postpones an examination can explain the decision as an application of a recognised principle of Islamic law rather than as a personal judgement. For ministries of education and national emergency management bodies in Oman and other Muslim-majority countries, the framework suggests that school-safety training could be delivered with explicit reference to Islamic legal principles, which may increase acceptance and compliance. It also offers a normative basis for policies on educational continuity, such as the use of remote learning during closures.

For Islamic education curricula, the framework identifies content, such as *maqasid*, legal maxims, *muhasabah*, and the ethics of preparation, through which resilience education (CSSF Pillar 3) can be integrated into existing subjects. Lessons on the story of Yusuf, on the hadith of the camel, or on the maxim that harm must be removed can be connected explicitly to hazard awareness and preparedness.

6.4 Propositions for future research

Because the framework is conceptual, its claims require empirical testing. Following Whetten (1989), a theoretical contribution should specify relationships that can be examined. The following propositions are offered for that purpose:

- P1: School leaders who frame disaster preparedness as a religious obligation (*ma la yatimm al-wajib illa bihi*) will report higher implementation of drills and emergency plans than those who frame it as an administrative requirement.

- P2: Training that integrates *maqasid*-based reasoning into school-safety content will produce greater acceptance of preparedness measures among teachers and parents in Muslim-majority settings than technical training alone.

- P3: School leaders who apply the priority of life over property (*dar' al-mafasid awla min jalb al-masalih*) will make faster evacuation decisions under emergency conditions.

- P4: Schools that conduct structured post-event reviews grounded in *muhasabah* and *shura* will show greater improvement in subsequent preparedness indicators than schools that do not.

- P5: School communities in which educational continuity is understood as a requirement of *hifz al-'aql* will resume learning more quickly after disaster-related closures than communities in which continuity is understood only as an administrative target.

The framework itself should first be validated by experts. A Delphi study could bring together three groups: school administrators in hazard-exposed governorates, specialists in Islamic jurisprudence, including scholars familiar with Ibadi jurisprudence, and disaster management professionals from the NCEM and the Ministry of Education. The first group would assess feasibility, the second the soundness of each juristic application in Table 2, and the third its consistency with national procedures. The results could be used to revise the framework before a pilot in a small number of schools. The propositions could then be tested through validated survey instruments, scenario-based decision experiments with school leaders, quasi-experimental evaluations of training programmes, or longitudinal studies of schools in hazard-exposed regions such as North Al Batinah. Qualitative studies with principals who managed schools during Cyclone Shaheen could also examine whether, and how, religious and legal reasoning entered their actual decisions.

Limitations

The framework has several limitations. It draws selectively on legal maxims that are widely accepted across the Sunni schools of law, and jurists differ on the scope and application of particular maxims. Although Table 3 shows how the main tensions were reconciled, other jurists might weigh them differently. Several of its applications are analogical extensions proposed by the authors, and they require review by specialists in Islamic jurisprudence before they can be treated as settled guidance. Its mapping of maxims to phases is analytical; in practice, several maxims operate in more than one phase, and the boundaries between phases are themselves fluid. The illustrative application is hypothetical and does not substitute for field validation. The framework also assumes that school actors are familiar with, or can be trained in, basic *maqasid* reasoning, an assumption that may not hold equally across contexts, and it depends on resources that schools do not always control. Its relationship to Ibadi jurisprudence, which is central to the Omani context, has not been examined in detail. Finally, the framework addresses Muslim-majority settings, and its transferability to plural or secular school systems requires separate consideration.

CONCLUSION

International school-safety frameworks set out what schools should do to protect their students and sustain learning in the face of hazards. This paper has argued that, for schools in Muslim-majority settings, the Islamic tradition of *maqasid al-shariah* and legal maxims can explain why those actions are obligatory and how competing goods should be weighed when they conflict. The proposed three-layer framework places the preservation of life, intellect, wealth, progeny, and religion, together with a contextual approach to their prioritisation, at the head of school disaster risk management. It then assigns specific legal maxims to the phases of prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery, shows how competing maxims are reconciled, identifies cross-cutting principles of trust, consultation, custom, and capacity, and links the outcome to the foundation and pillars of comprehensive school safety. Throughout, the paper has distinguished the established content of the tradition from the applications it proposes, and it has positioned the framework within, rather than alongside, Oman's national emergency management system.

Two claims of the framework deserve particular emphasis. First, preparation is not opposed to faith; within the Islamic legal tradition it is a religious obligation, and this understanding offers a principled response to fatalism. Second, the continuity of education after disaster is not only an administrative goal but a requirement of the preservation of intellect. Applied to a cyclone scenario in Sohar, the framework shows how technical good practice and religious reasoning can reinforce each other. Empirical testing of the propositions offered here is the necessary next step toward a school-safety culture that is both technically sound and grounded in the values of the communities it serves.

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