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How Can Smart City Technologies be Utilized to Align With and Enhance the Principles of Islamic Architecture?

* [1] **Reem Sultan** , [2] **Hawra'a Al Matooq** , [3] **Fatima Mulla** , and [4] **Tuqa Alaani**

Department of Architecture & interior, University of Bahrain, Bahrain

E-mail [1]: rsultan@uob.edu.bh , E-mail [2]: 20146124@stu.uob.edu.bh , E-mail [3]: 20080513@stu.uob.edu.bh , E-mail [4]: 20140442@stu.uob.edu.bh

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A b s t r a c t

In an era of rapid urbanization, smart cities leverage technologies like AI and IoT to enhance sustainability and optimize resource usage. However, integrating these innovations raises concerns about preserving cultural identities, especially within Islamic architecture. Rooted in religious, cultural, and social principles, Islamic architecture emphasizes sustainability, privacy, harmony with nature, and community cohesion. This research explores how smart city technologies can align with Islamic architectural principles. Using literature reviews, case studies, and community surveys, the study examines the potential for harmonizing technological innovation with Islamic values. Examples like Masdar City in the UAE show how advanced technologies can coexist with traditional Islamic design elements. Community surveys highlight opportunities and challenges, including privacy, social interaction, and economic accessibility. The findings stress the importance of integrating Islamic architectural values into smart city frameworks to preserve cultural heritage and promote sustainable, inclusive, and human-centered urban living. Recommendations are provided for designing future cities that balance technological progress with cultural authenticity.

K e y w o r d s : Smart City; Islamic Architecture; Technology.

1. Introduction

In a time marked by rapid technological progress and urban development, smart cities have emerged as a novel solution to address the increasing demands of communities." These cities utilize modern technology, like artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things, to optimize resource management, bolster sustainability, and attain unparalleled efficiency in their infrastructure. This development prompts enquiries over the capacity of these technologies to accommodate the cultural identity and urban legacy of diverse people, particularly within the Islamic world.

Deeply rooted in profound religious and societal values, Islamic architecture distinguishes itself with designs that harmonise functional beauty with spirituality, emphasising themes such as sustainability, privacy, and integration with nature. Throughout the centuries, these concepts have demonstrated their capacity to foster urban environments that enhance psychological and physical well-being while reinforcing social connections. Islamic architecture currently has substantial issues due to the prevalence of globalization and the transition toward standardized designs that disregard cultural distinctions.

Two principal concepts converge here: the vast potential of smart city technologies to enhance quality of life and sustainability Amen, Afara, and Nia 2023; Amen and Nia 2020, and the imperative to safeguard the cultural and spiritual identity embodied by Islamic architecture. This research poses a fundamental question: How can we leverage smart city technology to enhance the principles of Islamic architecture?

This project aims to investigate the potential integration of technological advancement with the principles of Islamic architecture by examining realistic models and conducting a thorough analysis of opportunities and challenges. The project seeks to provide a design vision that redefines the interplay between innovation and tradition, thereby augmenting the role of smart cities as sustainable urban environments that embody the character and identity of their respective communities.

Hybrid Conference, Choosen to submit this research paper there. This research paper correspond to Architecture and Technology one of the main sections conference scopes, and Smart Buildings of the Sub-section conference scopes.

Do we really need to return to the principles of Islamic architecture?

Despite the significant technological advancements that define the contemporary era, particularly the innovation of more resilient and sustainable materials, diversification of construction methods, and other developments driven by this technological renaissance, the design and building industry faces a series of challenges as a result of these advancements.We will identify some of them in this research:

1. The construction of a rigid and unyielding architectural setting, devoid of spirituality, cultural uniqueness, and communal seclusion, is evident.
2. Urban development, along with developments in technology, often disregards the limited amount of natural resources available on Earth's surface, which occasionally results in their depletion. The challenge consists in having the ability to create healthy, intelligent, and eco-friendly architectural structures.
3. The cost of urban technologies, especially smart building systems and smart homes, continues to rise despite their extensive variety and growing accessibility. This restricts its use by everyone, especially in personal investments that lack governmental funding.
4. Urbanization and technological advancements have led to a decrease in direct human interaction, according to a study in Austria, Sweden, and Finland. The study found that 40-60% of residents in smart city initiatives experienced reduced social interaction compared to traditional areas. A systematic review in South Korea, Japan, and the European Union found that 45% of smart city residents believe technology has reduced social interaction with neighbors.
5. The increasing usage of modern technology in smart buildings and cities has presented us with issues regarding data security and cybersecurity. For example, if attackers target the infrastructure's smart systems, it could result in significant harm due to the interruption of essential services. The protection of individuals' privacy within their own residences and private businesses faces significant issues due to breaches and violations, raising valid concerns about how dependent people are on technological improvements in the construction and planning of homes and facilities.
6. Technological advancements have negatively impacted human relationships and relationships with nature, leading to mental health challenges. Research shows prolonged exposure to environments lacking natural factors increases anxiety and tension. A university study suggests that interior design with natural features can reduce stress and increase productivity by 15-20%.

How can we address these challenges by revisiting the principles of Islamic architecture and integrating them with existing technologies?

Must first focus on Islamic urbanism's core ideas and how it promotes municipal and housing design and construction. Understanding these principles, which emphasize the human element in urbanism, allows us to formulate practical proposals that enhance the integration of technology in urban planning and construction, while addressing the challenges posed by the integration of modern technology with architecture, all in accordance with the fundamental principles and purposes of Islamic architecture. Among these principles, I identify:

1. Harmony: Islamic architecture emphasizes achieving a harmonious balance between functionality, aesthetics, and stability in its designs.
2. Privacy: The planning and design of private and public indoor and outdoor areas in Islamic cities adheres to the value of privacy, particularly around the building of houses and private utilities.
3. Sustainability: Islamic architecture established the principle of sustainability through innovating and designing architectural elements, such as interior courtyards, domes, and ventilation towers, which specified heat and environmental solutions at minimal costs while optimising sustainability.
4. The Holy Quran emphasizes the importance of meditating on nature's interactions, leading to Islamic architecture incorporating elements of nature into design. This approach creates interactive, healthy spaces for humans, promoting balance and sustainability, as seen in gardens, plants, inner courtyards, and water features.

Methodology

The research employed a broad, multifaceted methodology to fulfill its objectives and address the central inquiry: In what ways might smart city technology augment the principles of Islamic architecture?

The methodology utilized an amalgamation of theoretical and practical studies to provide a thorough and profound understanding of the interplay between technology and cultural identity in urban settings.

Literature Review

1. Literature Review: This phase encompassed a critical evaluation of prior studies to establish the theoretical framework for the investigation. The evaluation concentrated on three primary dimensions:

1. The research emphasized the significance of smart city technologies, including artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things, for improving efficiency and sustainability in urban settings.
2. nPrinciples of Islamic Architecture: We conducted an analysis of the fundamental values of Islamic architecture, such as balance, privacy, and harmony with nature, as well as its historical responses to various urban issues.
3. The study examined the relationship between technology and cultural identity within architectural contexts, emphasising the pursuit of equilibrium between innovation and heritage.

Used this methodology to establish a comprehensive theoretical framework that aids in recognizing the benefits and problems associated with the integration of smart city technologies with Islamic design.

2. Case study Analysis

Selected city that exemplifying successful implementations to examine the feasibility of integrating technology into Islamic design:

Examined the urban design of Masdar City (UAE), emphasizing the use of renewable energy technology and intelligent mobility, while incorporating Islamic architectural features like narrow pathways and shaded areas.

Case study: Masdar City—Abu Dabi

introduction

Masdar City is one of the world's most sustainable newly developed urban areas. Established in 2006 by Masdar (Mubadala Investment Company) with intentions to develop a city of the future, Masdar City is located in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, and seeks to reduce environmental concerns of development in the third millennium. The city aims to minimise its environmental impact through innovative design and technology.

1. The Sustainable Mobility Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) system and electric and automated personal vehicles reduce carbon footprints and simplify city navigation.
2. Energy Efficiency: Masdar City's smart grid and energy management systems reduce overall energy usage. Buildings use 40% less energy and water compared to similarly situated traditional buildings.
3. Digital Infrastructure: An integrated IT network runs Masdar City, and a smart center controls everything—from energy consumption to waste management—so the capacity to gather and analyze data in real time fosters more efficient and proactive efforts..
4. Innovation and Research: The city is home to several research institutions and firms that focus on clean tech, AI, and other innovative, sustainable endeavors, providing constant access to evaluative opportunities aimed at improving the standard of living..
5. Community and Liveability: The urban design promotes walkability, social interaction, and community engagement, creating a vibrant and connected ommunity. The city is walkable and breathable.

Sustainability pillars

Environmental

The creation of Masdar City necessitates achieving net zero. The city has been on such a path from day one, supporting the UAE's effort to mitigate the issues of climate change. Thus, Masdar City is part of the UAE's net zero intent. Every year, the city shares and publishes an ESG report that demonstrates its commitment to climate action. Additionally, Masdar City hosts a growing number of residents and workers who strive for sustainable living, as a new wave of sustainable thinking permeates the city's culture. The project lessens its impact on the environment via renewable energy, improved water use, and decreased production. Green building standards and sustainable urban planning aim to make Masdar City carbon neutral and waste-free.

Economic

We want Masdar City to be profitable, not just a place to hide money. If the real estate development is not profitable, it cannot be sustained. Masdar property developer, Yousef Mohammed, 2009

The project guarantees sustainable economic viability through innovation, development, and job creation. Masdar will continue to foster a diversified economy outside of oil and gas and concentrate on clean technology and sustainable efforts.

Social

Quality of life for all inhabitants. Opportunities for community engagement and cultural programming encourage better connectivity. Thus, the socio-connected aspects of urban design are inclusive of necessary spaces for social living, cultural engagement, and leisure.

Cultural

The culture and heritage of a people persist and permeate daily life. This stems from Islamic culture and, more recently, has been linked to related architectural styles, which indicate the mindset behind this city's construction.

Technologies incorporated

Masdar City has developed a variety of new technological applications, such as solar thermal cooling, wind towers, geothermics, and new transport systems.

What are the Islamic principles used in urban planning in Masdar City?

1. **Adaptation to Climate:** Much of Islamic architecture emerges to combat an intolerable climate of narrow, shaded streets and alleyways. Thus, Masdar City has non-linear paths and shaded features to minimize heat retention while encouraging walkability.
2. **Sustainability: Islamic teachings emphasize the stewardship of the earth.**
   Masdar City aims to be carbon-neutral and zero-waste, reflecting this principle through the use of renewable energy sources like solar power and wind towers.
3. **Community and Social Interaction:** Islamic cities are built for the purpose of social elements and social interaction, akin to traditional Islamic urban layouts that encourage communal spaces and social cohesion. Thus, the configuration of Masdar City supports this same urban construction.
4. **Integration of Nature:** Islamic city design calls for gardens and green spaces as they are integral to Islamic urban design. Masdar City boasts numerous green spaces and parks, which act as visual embellishments to the city and enhancements to the residents' quality of life.

These principles help Masdar City blend modern sustainability goals with traditional Islamic values, creating a unique and forward-thinking urban environment.

The Future Standard of Living

While construction began in 2008, Masdar City now contains one of the largest clusters of LEED Platinum buildings in the world:

1. Traditional Arabic architecture blends with modern technology and design to create the city.
2. The Department of Municipalities and Transport's (DMT) Estidama and/or the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED green building rating system certify buildings to high sustainability standards.
3. The community also features amenities, such as recreational facilities, two parks, and green spaces, covering a total area of over 59,000 square meters.

Community Data Collection

A survey was conducted as the main tool for collecting direct data from community members, with the aim of:

1. Measuring the level of individuals' awareness of smart city technologies and their impact on Islamic values.
2. Determining the degree of acceptance of technology in urban environments with an Islamic character.
3. Identifying the challenges and concerns related to privacy, social interaction, and implementation costs is crucial.

Survey details

1. There are 20 questions, ranging from closed to open-ended.
2. Study sample: To ensure a comprehensive representation of community opinions, a diverse group of individuals from different cultural and age backgrounds were included in the sample.
3. Main topics: the impact of technology on privacy, the potential to enhance social interaction, and the extent to which technology respects cultural values.

Analysis

Used statistical techniques to analyze the data, focusing on the challenges and opportunities that the participants identified.

Theoretical and practical analysis Theoretical and Practical Analysis

Integrated and analysed the data collected from literature reviews, case studies, and surveys to produce a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between technology and Islamic architecture. This phase included:

1. Analyzing the relationship between technology and Islamic values—identifying points of agreement and conflict.
2. The evaluation of smart city models involves exploring how to balance innovation and cultural heritage.
3. Extracting design insights: Providing design recommendations based on research findings to support the principles of Islamic architecture using technology.

Reasons for choosing the methodology

The research employed a broad and multifaceted methodology to address the primary inquiry: In what ways might smart city technology augment the principles of Islamic architecture?

The methodology employs an amalgamation of theoretical and practical studies to provide a thorough and profound understanding of the interplay between technology and cultural identity in urban environments.

Chosen this methodology for a number of reasons:

1. Integration of theory and practice: The amalgamation of literature research, case studies, and surveys facilitates a thorough study encompassing both theoretical and practical dimensions.
2. Emphasising the cultural context: Case studies offer an authentic perspective on the integration of technology with Islamic values in actual initiatives.
3. Facilitating a comprehensive grasp of the community's perspectives and anticipations concerning the influence of technology on their lives and cultural values.
4. Attaining research objectives: This methodology facilitates a thorough response to the research issue, yielding practical and usable recommendations.

Survey Details: Objectives of the Survey: Developed the survey with the following high-level goals in mind:

1. Learning about the community's familiarity with smart city technologies and their potential benefits in their daily lives.
2. Determining whether people embrace technology as a tool for Islam in urban design.
3. Highlighting challenges to the application of technology in the Islamic Polis, such as privacy and social interactions.

Survey Design for Smart Cities:

• Awareness Dimension: Questions about familiarity with smart cities and belief in their potential to improve quality of life.

• Impact on Islamic Values Dimension: Questions about the potential of technology to strengthen privacy in Islamic architecture and uphold Islamic values in smart city design.

• Challenges and Concerns Dimension: Questions about the impact of technology on social interaction and the high cost of technology.

• Acceptance and Opportunities Dimension: Questions about willingness to adopt smart city technologies if they improve the urban environment.

Study Sample:

• Participants: Participants from various age groups and cultural backgrounds.

• Target Groups: Individuals from the general community and urban Islamic areas interested in implementing smart city technologies.
• Distribution Method: Questionnaire was distributed online using Google Forms and promoted on social media platforms and specialized groups in architecture and technology.
• Question Types: Closed-Ended Questions and Likert Scale Questions.
• Data Analysis: Tools like Excel and Google Sheets used for statistical data analysis.
Implementation Challenges:
• Challenges in gathering responses from specific segments and balancing individual perspectives.
• Importance of Data:

Identified community priorities, views on privacy and sustainability, and issues like expenses and technology's influence on interpersonal communication.

Conclusion

This paper represents an extensive investigation into the prospects and obstacles linked to the application of smart city technology for the advancement of Islamic architectural principles. Given the swift transformations occurring globally, these principles serve not merely as a historical foundation but as a value-centric guide that may enhance smart cities, rendering them more inclusive and sustainable.

Main results

The potential of smart cities in promoting Islamic values: The research established that smart cities have the capacity to uphold essential Islamic principles such as privacy, communal harmony, and ecological sustainability when they intentionally construct technology. The examined cases, including Masdar City, illustrated the integration of advanced technologies with designs that embody Islamic tradition, suggesting the feasibility of developing harmonious smart cities that merge innovation with authenticity.

Challenges and impediments

The poll results indicated that the primary obstacles were elevated costs, insufficient community awareness, and issues pertaining to social privacy. Participants expressed concern that the rapid pace of technological advancements could lead to adaptation challenges and create a gap between technology and society.

The function of institutions and society

Religious institutions and the local community have become pivotal in facilitating the effective deployment of smart city technologies. Ethical directives, educational initiatives, and community engagement in the design and execution process demonstrate this.

Future recommendations

Creating an Integrated Urban Framework involves formulating a holistic design approach that integrates Islamic principles with contemporary technologies. This framework must enhance privacy, reduce expenses, and improve quality of life by emphasizing social and environmental sustainability.

Innovative sustainability and affordability: The emphasis must be on delivering intelligent, cost-effective, and practical solutions across diverse settings. This entails embracing innovative solutions that honor social institutions and harmonize modernity with cultural identities.

Implementation of training programs and awareness initiatives is essential to educate individuals about smart technologies and their significance, thereby mitigating community resistance and enhancing acceptance.

Involving the local community and institutions: The design and implementation process must be inclusive, engaging the local community to address their requirements and ensuring that the technical solutions correspond with their expectations and values.

Future Vision

Smart cities are not merely technological frameworks; they embody the society they serve. This research is a significant advancement in Islamic civilizations, as Islamic architecture is essential to cultural identity. It aims to develop balanced cities that harmonize modernity with traditional values. Addressing the issues and implementing sustainable and ethical smart technology can significantly improve quality of life while safeguarding cultural and religious heritage.

Summary

The study's results underscored the importance of aligning technological advancements with cultural and religious beliefs. Collaboration between designers, the community, and institutions can bring Islamic ideals to life in smart cities. We can envision a future where modernism and authenticity coexist, utilizing technology to support humanity while preserving its identity and culture.

Call for more research

Finally, this study recommends conducting more research to improve our understanding of how to effectively use technology in Islamic civilizations with a focus on long-term innovation and the promotion of social values. This strategy enables the construction of a future that balances modernity and tradition, putting people and values at the hear.

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Appendix 02: Survay anaysis

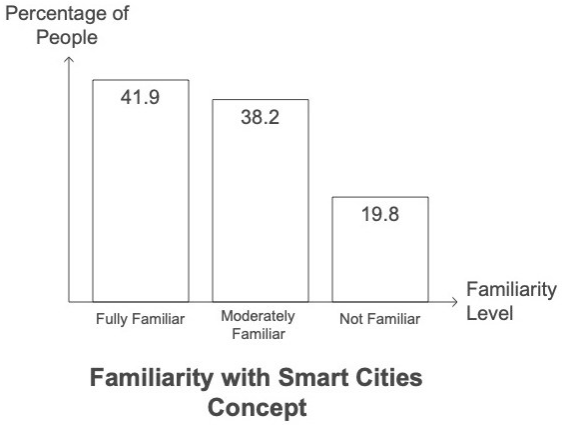

Figure 01. Bar chart illustrates how familiar that people with the concept of "smart cities"?

41.9% of people are fully familiar with smart cities, and 38.2% are middle familiar. However, 19.8% of people are not familiar with smart cities.

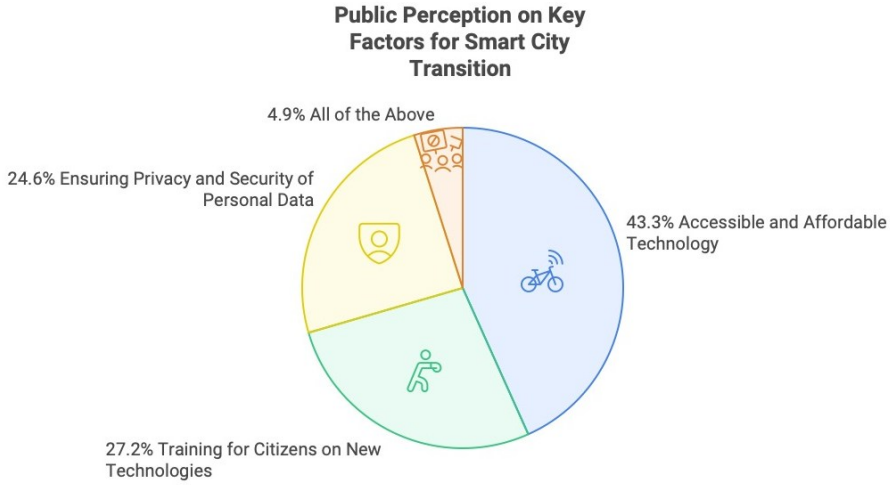

Figure 02. Pie charts illustrates people believe about the most important factors to ensure a smooth transition to a smart city.

27.2% of people believe training for citizens on new technologies is the most important factors, 43.3% of people believe they the accessible affordable technology for all citizens is, and 24.6% of people believe ensuring privacy and security of personal data.

However, 4.9% of people believe that all the above is important.

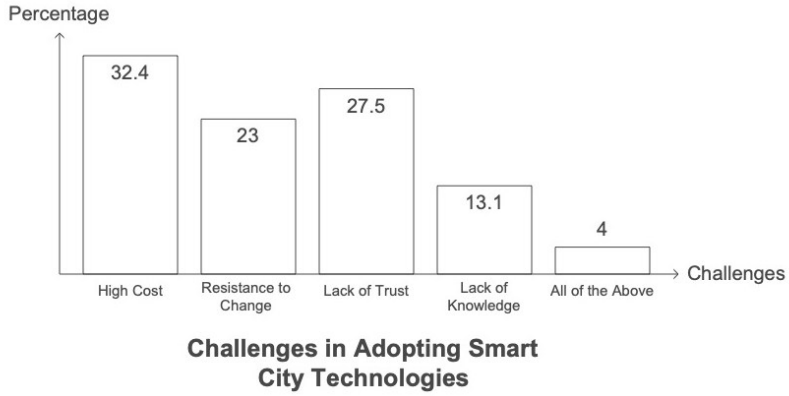

Figure 03. The bar chart highlights challenges in adopting smart city technologies.

The biggest concern is the high cost of technology 32.4%, followed by Resistance to change from traditional lifestyles practices 23%. Lack of trust in technology, including data privacy concerns, accounts for 27.5%, while 13.1% cite a lack of knowledge about the technology. However, 4% all the above is a foresee challenge.

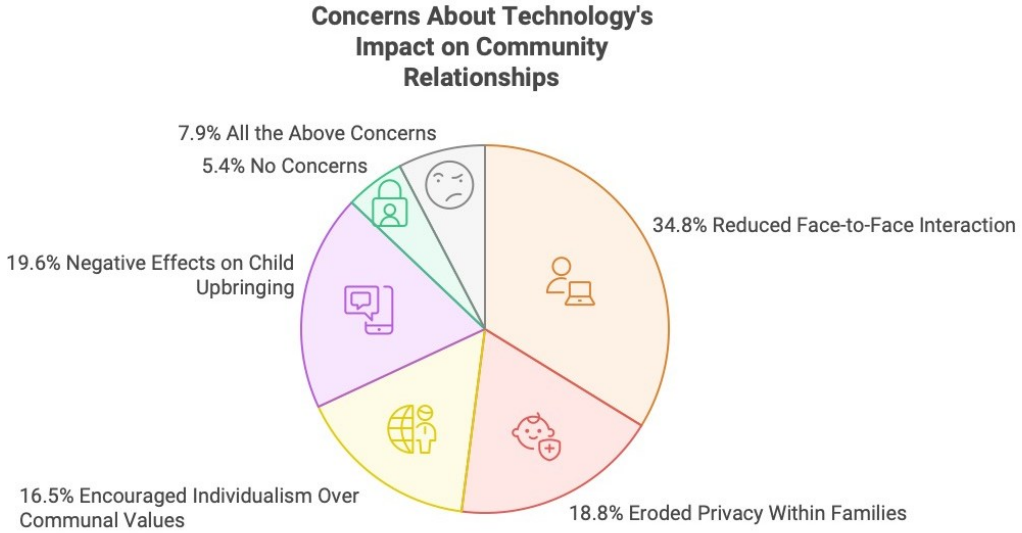

Figure 04. The pie chart illustrates the concerns that people have about the impact of technology on relationships in the community.

34.8% concerns about reduce face-to-face interaction, 18.8% erode privacy within families, 16.5% encourage individualism over communal values, and 19.6% negatively affect the upbringing of children. However, 5.4% the don't have concerns, while 7.9% all the above is a concerns.

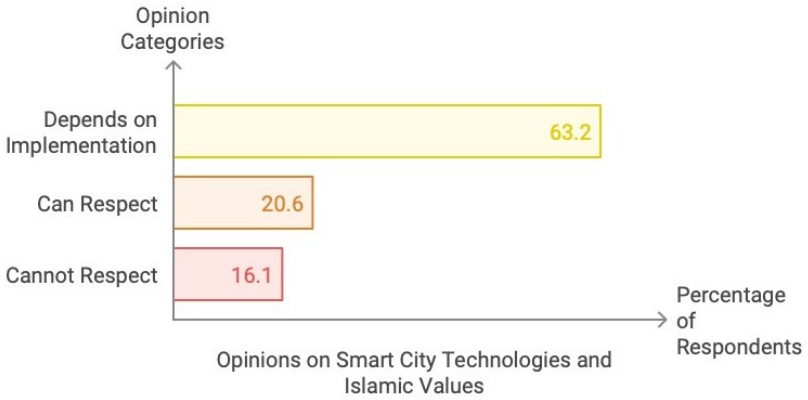

Figure 05. The bar chart illustrates opinions on whether smart city technologies can respect and enhance Islamic values like community cohesion, privacy, and respect for nature.

The majority 63.2% believe it depends on how the technology is implemented, 20.6% agree it can, while 16.1% disagree.

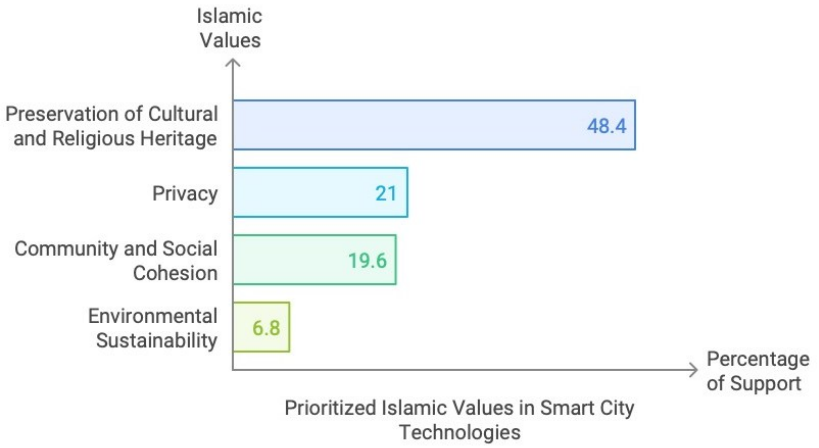

Figure 06. The bar chart shows responses on what are there specific Islamic values you believe should be prioritized in the design and implementation of smart city technologies?

Nearly half 48.4% support Preservation of cultural and religious heritage. Individual priorities include privacy 21%, Community and social cohesion 19.6%, and 6.8% environmental sustainability, while smaller groups favor other values.

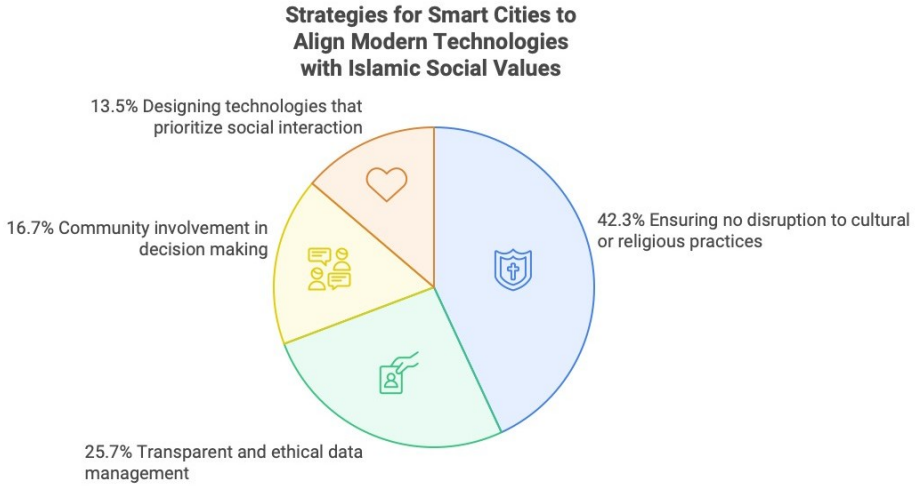

Figure 07. The pie chart shows responses on how can smart cities ensure that the integration of modern technologies aligns with Islamic social values, such as respect for privacy and communal harmony.

Nearly half 42.3% support ensuring that technological developments do not disrupt cultural or religious practices. Through transparent and ethical data management policies 25.7%, By involving community members in decision making 16.7%, and 13.5% By designing technologies that prioritize social interaction, while smaller groups choose all abouve.

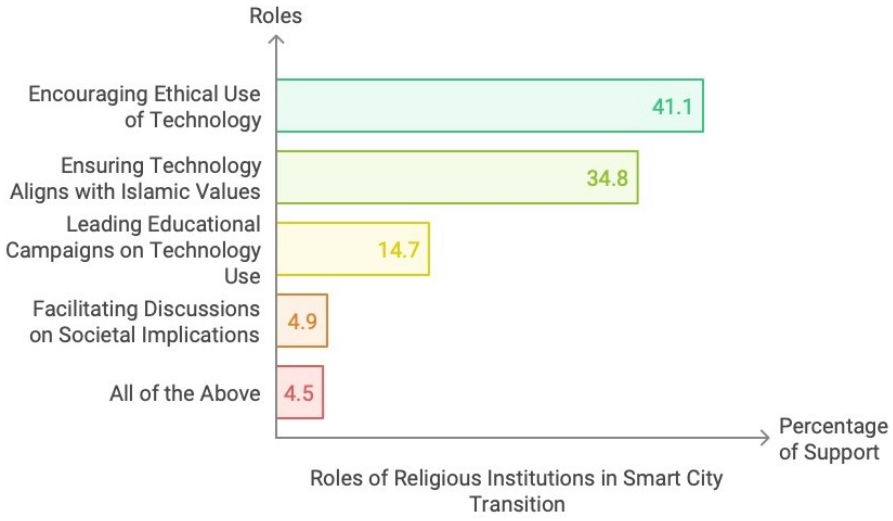

Figure 08. The chart shows responses on what role that people think religious institutions should play in the transition to a smart city.

41.1% support encouraging ethical use of technology based on Islamic teachings. Ensuring that technological changes do not conflict with Islamic values 34.8%, leading educational campaigns on technology use 14.7%, and 4.9% Facilitating discussions on the societal implications of technology, while 4.5% choosed all abouve.

Figure 09. The chart shows responses on how people feel about the general pace of technological change in the community.

Half 50.2% support it is too quickly. It is happening at the right pace 29.6%, while 20.3% support it is too slowly.

Figure 10. The bar chart shows responses on would people be willing to embrace smart city technologies if they could improve quality of life in your community.

Nearly half 50.2% responses yes. Depending on how it's implemented 30.6%, and no 4.5%, while 5.4% responses unsure.

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