

PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION IN SCHOOLS: EDUCATIONAL GROUNDING OF THE MAXIM "HARM MUST BE ELIMINATED" IN STUDENT PROTECTION

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Abstract: This study highlights the organic relationship between the major jurisprudential maxim "Harm Must Be Eliminated" (Al-Darrar Yuzal) and the concepts of prevention and early intervention in educational institutions. This relationship serves as an integrated legal and educational framework to ensure the students' psychological, physical, and intellectual safety. The paper is based on a vision that combines jurisprudential grounding with reliance on the latest literature in educational psychology and school administration, attempting to formulate a sustainable preventive model that blocks the occurrence of harm before it escalates. The study seeks to answer three central questions: How can the maxim "Harm Must Be Eliminated" be leveraged to establish preventive school policies? How can this principle be translated into practical procedures in the domain of psychological and physical safety? What is the role of the culture of accountability and responsibility in achieving this legal educational objective? The study adopts a dual methodology: the Inductive Methodology to derive concepts from the maxim's texts and foundational sources, and the Analytical Methodology to link these concepts to contemporary practices in school administration and preventive psychology. The results demonstrate that the maxim "Harm Must Be Eliminated" offers an advanced methodological vision that transcends the remedial aspect toward the preventive, making it an effective framework for designing early detection programs and preventive policies in education.

Keywords: Harm Must Be Eliminated; Prevention in Education; Early Intervention; School Safety; Educational Accountability.

INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

Contemporary educational institutions face increasing challenges concerning the psychological and behavioral safety of students, and the need to build a secure school environment capable of accommodating individual differences and preventing academic and social risks. The need for profound ethical and philosophical frameworks to guide these educational practices is a major requirement in modern educational policies. In this context, the major jurisprudential maxim "Harm Must Be Eliminated" stands out as an integrated framework that combines the preventive legal approach with modern educational logic in managing educational risks (Al-Zuhayli, 2006).

The jurisprudential principle "Harm Must Be Eliminated"—derived from the Prophetic saying: "There shall be no harm nor counter-harm" (lā ḍarar wa lā ḍirār)—is not merely an ethical directive, but a fundamental comprehensive maxim with legislative and administrative extensions that regulate human relationships in all areas of life, including the educational field (Al-Zarqa, 1989).

From a linguistic perspective, al-ḍarar (harm) is defined as distress or injury that affects a person in their body, wealth, or honor (Ibn Manzur, 1995). Technically, in jurisprudence, it is what inflicts detriment unjustly, whether through an action or omission (Al-Jurjani, 1983). Elimination (al-izālāh) refers to lifting the harmful effect or averting it before its occurrence. Consequently, the essence of the maxim rests on preventing harm initially, then eliminating it if it occurs, and minimizing its effect if complete elimination is unattainable (Al-Zuhayli, 2006).

This understanding places a dual responsibility on the educational institution: not only to eliminate harm

after it occurs but also to work on the preventive measures against its causes. The school - as an influential social environment - possesses unique tools through which it can apply the legal objectives related to the preservation of life, intellect, and progeny, which are purposes Sharia aims to protect from any injury or

Modern educational studies have addressed the concept of school prevention as one of the most important axes of educational risk management.

International reports - such as the Child Mind Institute report (2016) - confirmed that adopting early intervention strategies within schools contributes to reducing rates of psychological and behavioral problems by up to 40% during the initial years of application (Child Mind Institute, 2016). Furthermore, a recent systematic review showed that preventive programs based on cooperation between teachers and psychological specialists contribute effectively to reducing bullying and school violence (Neil & Christensen, 2009). Therefore, linking these modern concepts with the jurisprudential principle "Harm Must Be Eliminated" is an educational necessity, as the legal dimension grants these programs ethical and methodological legitimacy, transforming them from regulatory policies into religious obligations based on the objectives of Sharia.

1.1 Research Questions

1. What are the preventive and procedural educational concepts that can be derived from the maxim "Harm Must Be Eliminated"?
2. How can school programs activate these concepts within prevention and early intervention strategies?
3. What are the mechanisms capable of applying the concepts of safety and educational accountability based on the principle of harm elimination?

1.2 METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the Inductive Analytical Methodology as the most suitable research tool for integrating the two references: the legal and the educational. The methodological steps were carried out as follows:

- **Jurisprudential Induction:** Educational concepts were derived from the texts of the jurisprudential maxim and its branches in books of maxims and analogies, and from their contemporary commentaries (Al-Zarqa, 1989; Al-Zuhayli, 2006).
- **Comparative Analysis:** The derived concepts were linked to modern practices in educational psychology and school administration, such as the concepts of preventive education and early intervention (Larmar & Gatfield, 2007).
- **Applied Analysis:** The feasibility of converting the jurisprudential concept into a policy model within the school was studied through safety regulations and institutional accountability.
- **Referential Verification:** A comparison was made between the Islamic framework and global principles of school safety as presented in modern educational literature (Berger, Reupert, & Allen, 2020).

Educational Concepts Derived from the Maxim "Harm Must Be Eliminated"

The maxim points to three temporal stages for addressing injury:

Prevention before occurrence, Elimination upon occurrence, and Immunization against recurrence. Based on this, three major educational concepts forming the preventive framework for educational policies grounded in this maxim were extracted: (1) Prevention and Early Intervention, (2) Promoting Psychological and Physical Safety, and (3) Building a Culture of Responsibility and Educational Accountability. This part will detail the first concept.

2.1 Prevention and Early Intervention as an Educational Strategy:

Prevention is considered the first and most important stage in activating the maxim "Harm Must Be Eliminated", as it expresses the proactive side of legal responsibility. In the educational field, prevention refers to every effort made to stop behavioral or academic problems before they arise, while early intervention refers to the organized procedures taken to address the very beginnings of educational harm or risk (Berger et al., 2020). Scholars of the fundamentals of jurisprudence affirm that the maxim "Harm Must Be Eliminated" inherently includes the prohibition of inflicting harm initially, not merely eliminating it after occurrence (Al-Zuhayli, 2006). This meaning corresponds to the educational concept of prevention as a tool to stop the chain of harms before they escalate. Thus, the intersection of the legal maxim with the educational concept forms a scientific basis for developing preventive educational programs.

First: The Educational Concept Prevention in education means building an institutional system that seeks to detect psychological and behavioral risks before they turn into problems that impede learning. This system includes early detection tools, guidance and counseling, continuous training, and family engagement (Child Mind Institute, 2016). Early intervention is the subsequent stage, referring to a rapid set of procedures to address problems in their infancy through psychological or academic support (Larmar & Gatfield, 2007). In light of this, these concepts intersect with Islamic teachings that urge the elimination of harm before it escalates, as jurisprudential maxims state: "Averting detriment precedes attracting benefit" (Al-Zarqa, 1989). Bullying, academic failure, or behavioral disorders are all forms of harm that the educational institution must prevent, in fulfillment of the legal objectives of preserving life

and intellect.

Second: The Procedural Dimension The applied translation of this concept is manifested in a set of preventive educational procedures and policies, such as:

- **Early Screening and Assessment:** Adopting periodic survey tools to detect students at risk of behavioral deviation or academic failure.
- **Preventive Guidance Programs:** Designing educational programs that integrate mental and social health concepts into the curricula.
- **Professional Teacher Training:** Developing training programs to enable teachers to recognize early indicators of psychological and behavioral harm.
- **School-Family Collaboration:** Enhancing communication with parents to exchange information about cases requiring early intervention.

Numerous studies have proven that schools applying systematic preventive programs show a decrease in absence and violence rates by up to 35% compared to schools that do not adopt these programs (Neil & Christensen, 2009). Literature also confirms that the principle of early intervention significantly improves academic outcomes when integrated into general school policies (Berger et al., 2020).

Third: The Legal Dimension From the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence, these procedures are considered compliance with a general legal principle aimed at lifting hardship and preserving the necessities. A school that neglects the preventive aspect implicitly contributes to the continuation of harm, which contradicts the saying of the Prophet, peace be upon him: "There shall be no harm nor counter-harm" (Narrated by Ibn Majah). Therefore, preventive programs in education can be considered a collective obligation (Fard Kifayah) for educational institutions, as they achieve a legal objective related to the preservation of life and intellect (Al-Bar, 2019).

Fourth: Integration with Educational Psychology Modern theories in educational psychology—such as the Preventive Approach to Behavioral Development model—affirm that early detection of psychological and behavioral problems in students contributes to reducing their future effects, especially in the primary stages (Berger et al., 2020).

This aligns with the Islamic principle that "Prevention is better than cure," which expresses the practical wisdom of the maxim "Harm Must Be Eliminated" in its human and social dimension. In this sense, the maxim is not limited to jurisprudential texts but extends to become an interpretive tool for institutional behavior in schools and a source for educational legislation that achieves the objectives of protection and care.

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Imam Al-Izz ibn Abd al-Salam—the Sultan of Scholars—reinforces the preventive dimension in addressing harms, emphasizing that the Sharia is based on prioritizing the aversion of detriment (dar' al-mafāsīd) over the realization of benefit (jalb al-maṣāliḥ) when they conflict, and that one of its objectives is "blocking the means to corruption before it occurs" (sadd dharā'i' al-fasād).

He states in Qawā'id al-Aḥkām: "When benefits and detriments conflict, averting detriment is given precedence over realizing benefit.

This is because the Sharia's concern for guarding against detriments is greater than its concern for realizing benefits.

This is why it legislated punishments and deterrents that restrain against corruption and prevent its occurrence originally".

He further clarifies: "The axis of the Sharia rests on the realization of benefits and the aversion of detriments.

This is sometimes achieved by lifting existing harm, and sometimes by preventing what leads to it".

These texts underscore that prevention is not an administrative choice, but an authentic legal obligation that is at the core of the Sharia's objectives, which place the prevention of harm before its elimination after occurrence.

Consequently, it can be adopted as a foundational basis for early intervention programs and preventive policies within the school (Al-Izz ibn Abd al-Salam, 1991, Vol. 1, pp. 5–7).

2.2 Promoting Psychological and Physical Safety in the School Environment

The concept of psychological and physical safety represents the natural extension of the second stage of applying the maxim "Harm Must Be Eliminated," which is the elimination of injury immediately upon its occurrence, or the mitigation of its effects if complete elimination is impossible. Just as Sharia mandated the elimination of harm occurring to life, wealth, and intellect, modern education affirms that protecting the student from violence and psychological danger is an essential condition for effective learning (Al-Hasan, 2020).

First: Psychological Safety Psychological safety is the student's feeling of reassurance and stability within the educational environment, and the absence of feelings of fear, threat, or exclusion. Educational psychological research indicates that the absence of psychological safety is associated with decreased academic achievement and increased dropout rates (Berger et al., 2020).

Studies also confirm that having a supportive school culture reduces the likelihood of behavioral disorders and depression among students (Child Mind Institute, 2016). From the jurisprudential perspective, psychological safety falls within the scope of preserving life and intellect, which are two of the Five Necessities (al-ḍarūriyyāt al-khams) that Sharia came to protect (Al-Zuhayli, 2006).

Consequently, any school practice that disrupts the student's psychological stability or human dignity is considered a harm that must be eliminated immediately. Bullying, social exclusion, and harsh punishments are all manifestations that conflict with the Sharia's objective of protecting the individual from harm.

Second: Physical Safety Physical safety relates to securing the school's infrastructure to ensure the safety of students and staff from physical hazards. Educational studies have indicated that 20% of school accidents can be avoided through the application of safety regulations and preventive maintenance (Al-Jamal, 2018). This includes maintaining buildings and facilities, securing emergency exits, implementing evacuation plans, and providing first-aid tools. The jurisprudential maxim "Harm Must Be Eliminated" contributes to guiding this type of procedure through the principle of the necessity of eliminating the causes of harm, not just its results. As jurists stipulated that "The means have the rulings of the ends," preparing a physically safe environment is considered a means to achieve the legal objective of

preserving life (Al-Zarqa, 1989).

Al-Qarafi, in Al-Furūq, highlights a crucial dimension in understanding the maxim "Harm Must Be Eliminated," which is that the elimination of harm is achieved not only by lifting its effects but also by removing its causes and the contexts of its occurrence. Leaving the causes that lead to harm while retaining the capacity to prevent them is considered neglect that contradicts the objectives of Sharia.

He states: "The Sharia came with the elimination of harm, and this is only achieved by eliminating its causes, because the ruling revolves with the cause (illah) in existence and non-existence. Thus, as long as the cause remains, the effect remains, and eliminating the cause is truly eliminating the harm".

He also asserts: "Precaution in averting detriments is obligatory when the occurrence of harm is probable, as the greatest purpose of religious obligation is the protection of lives, wealth, and honor from sources of corruption".

This foundational jurisprudential principle confirms that physical safety procedures in schools (such as preventive maintenance, risk assessment, and activating evacuation plans) are not merely regulatory actions, but practical implementations of a legal principle that mandates the elimination of the causes leading to harm (Al-Qarafi, 1998, Vol. 1, pp. 177–178).

Third: Educational Application Promoting psychological and physical safety requires a set of practical policies, the most prominent of which are:

- **Adopting Clear Behavioral Regulations:** These should include defining harmful actions and mechanisms for dealing with them with transparency and educational fairness.
- **Anti-Bullying Programs:** Through awareness, school theater, and collective activities that promote values of respect and cooperation.
- **Activating Psychological Support:** Through school counseling units that offer preventive and individual sessions for students in need.
- **Crisis Response Training:** Preparing the school staff to face emergencies (accidents, assaults, disasters) quickly and effectively.
- **Physical Environment Monitoring:** Through periodic oversight of facilities, equipment, and educational resources.

Studies show that schools applying an integrated psychological and physical safety system achieve compliance rates and student satisfaction higher by 25% than others (Berger et al., 2020). These results align with the legal understanding that makes the elimination of harm a condition for the rectitude of human civilization.

2.3 Building a Culture of Responsibility and Educational Accountability

This concept derives its roots from the collective principle in the jurisprudential maxim, as the elimination of harm is insufficient without establishing an institutional culture that prevents its recurrence. Responsibility and accountability are two pillars for ensuring the sustainability of prevention within the school, just as they express the objectives of justice and equity affirmed by Islam in the Almighty's saying: "No burdened soul will bear the burden of another" (Al-An'am: 164).

First: The Educational Concept Educational responsibility is defined as the individual's awareness of their role in preserving the safety of the educational environment, while accountability refers to a system that ensures harmful behaviors are held to account fairly and transparently (Al-Hasan, 2020). These concepts are related to moral education and building a balanced personality, and are considered part of the 21st-century skills in value-based education.

Second: The Legal Basis Islamic jurisprudence establishes that the elimination of harm is a collective responsibility, based on the Prophet's saying, peace be upon him: "Whoever among you sees an evil, let him change it with his hand; if he is unable, then with his tongue..." (Narrated by Muslim). With this understanding, the commitment of every member of the school community to initiate the prevention of injury becomes a legal and ethical duty. Furthermore, the partial maxim subservient to the major maxim: "Specific harm is tolerated to avert general harm", confirms that the school must take firm decisions to prevent broader harms, even if that requires direct intervention toward the source of the risk (Al-Zarqa, 1989).

Third: Institutional Application Building a culture of accountability within the school necessitates adopting procedures such as:

- **A Confidential Reporting System:** Enables students and teachers to report incidents of injury or risk without fear.
- **An Internal Accountability Body:** Includes representatives from the administration, teachers, and students to review harmful behaviors and make appropriate decisions.
- **Restorative Justice Policies:** Adopts reconciliation instead of punishment, through dialogue, compensation, and restoration of dignity.
- **Institutional Self-Assessment:** Periodically measures the school's adherence to preventive policies and the elimination of harm.
- **Programs to Promote Belonging and Social Responsibility:** Educates students on respecting the rules and reporting errors with a spirit of participation, not fear.

Literature has shown that a culture of transparent accountability leads to improved student behavior and

reduced conflicts by 30% (Berger et al., 2020). It also contributes to cementing the ethical values that are the core of the educational process in the Islamic perspective (Al-Bar, 2019).

Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd highlights the necessity of **considering the consequences** (al-maʿālāt) when assessing harm and determining responsibility. He clarifies that actions are to be judged not solely by their manifest form, but by examining their ultimate outcomes in terms of benefit or detriment.

He states in *Ihkām al-Ahkām*: "What is truly considered are the realities of actions and their consequences. An act may be permissible in its origin, but if it leads to great harm, it is prohibited in order to block the means to detriment (saddan lil-dharīʿah)."

He also asserts: "It is incumbent upon whoever is entrusted with an affair of the Muslims to consider the ultimate consequence of their action, whether it leads to a benefit or a detriment. For the purpose of Sharia-based actions is to realize benefits, however small, and to avert detriments, however subtle."

This text establishes a culture of responsibility and accountability within the school. It demonstrates that the assessment of harmful behavior is not limited to its immediate occurrence, but encompasses its anticipated effects on the educational environment.

This perspective is entirely consistent with the modern educational philosophies of "prevention" and "risk management" in contemporary education. (Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd, 1995, Vol. 1, p. 92).

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The study results demonstrated that the maxim "Harm Must Be Eliminated" represents an integrated legal and institutional framework through which educational policies can be reformulated in light of preventive objectives. It was shown that activating this principle passes through three pillars:

- **Prevention and Early Intervention:** By designing proactive programs to detect psychological and behavioral risks.
- **Promoting Psychological and Physical Safety:** By establishing a secure school environment that achieves reassurance and discipline.
- **Cementing a Culture of Responsibility and Accountability:** By enabling all members of the school community to perform their role in protection and monitoring.

This framework intersects with the major legal objectives of preserving life, intellect, and progeny, and with modern educational trends in preventive school administration. Thus, the jurisprudential maxim "Harm Must Be Eliminated" becomes a bridge between the Islamic heritage and modern educational science, offering a practical model for the integration of values and systems.

Practical Recommendations

- **Integrating the Legal Dimension into Educational Policies:** Include the principle "Harm Must Be Eliminated" in school behavioral regulations and safety guides.
- **Enhancing Prevention and Early Intervention Programs:** Adopt periodic assessment tools to detect students with behavioral or academic risk.
- **Activating Psychological and Social Support:** Establish specialized units in every school in cooperation with specialists from the Ministries of Education and Health.
- **Training Educational Staff:** Include training programs on prevention strategies and crisis management in the professional development plan for teachers.
- **Establishing a Transparent Accountability System:** Create standing committees to investigate incidents of injury or educational neglect within schools, with semi-annual reports.
- **Continuous Research:** Support field research that assesses the impact of applying the maxim on improving the school climate and academic outcomes.

Proposed Model for a School Policy Based on the Maxim "Harm Must Be Eliminated"

First – Vision: A secure school environment free from physical and psychological harm, based on prevention and early response.

Second – Mission: Activating the objectives of Sharia in preserving life and intellect through preventive policies and participatory educational accountability.

Third – Objectives:

- Identify sources of injury and risks in the school environment.
- Establish a monitoring and early intervention system for students at risk.
- Develop effective psychological and educational support programs.
- Ensure the application of accountability after every incident of injury.

Fourth – Implementation Axes:

- **Prevention:** Awareness campaigns, training, promoting a culture of respect.
- **Early Intervention:** A response team consisting of the school principal, student counselor, classroom teacher, and parent.
- **Physical Safety:** Periodic facility maintenance and semi-annual evacuation drills.
- **Accountability:** A three-member committee reviews reports and adopts corrective decisions.

Fifth – Assessment: Quarterly reports measuring safety and discipline indicators and the percentage of behavioral incidents, submitted to the education administration.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the maxim "Harm Must Be Eliminated" is not merely a theoretical jurisprudential principle, but a **practical educational maxim convertible into an integrated administrative system in schools**. It combines **ethical value** with **institutional effectiveness**, and provides a starting point for thinking about education as a preventive system aimed at safeguarding the human being before reforming them. The inclusion of this maxim in Saudi educational regulations and policies contributes to achieving one of the objectives of Vision 2030, which is building a secure and stimulating educational environment, based on Islamic values and principles of sustainable human development.

Acknowledgment: The authors are thankful to the Deanship of Graduate Studies and Scientific Research at Najran University for funding this work under the Najran Research Funding Program grant code: (NU/NRP/SEHRC/13/499-1).

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