

LLMs and Islamic Fiqh

A Reliability Study Grounded in Maliki Jurisprudential Principles

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Introduction and Purpose

- LLMs are increasingly used to answer Islamic questions, but their reliability in school-specific Fiqh — such as the Maliki school — remains unexplored.
- Different Fiqh schools use different methodological rules, so accuracy requires following the reasoning framework of the specific school—not just general Islamic knowledge.
- This study examines how two widely used Arabic LLMs handle Maliki-specific Fiqh questions, and investigates whether prompt design can improve their adherence to authentic Maliki jurisprudential principles

Methodology

□ Dataset

- 550 Maliki Fiqh questions across three domains: purification (Tahārah), marital jurisprudence (Fiqh Al-Nikāh), and financial transactions (Buyū)

Table 1: Summary of the Islamic Fiqh dataset.

Question Type	Tahārah	Fiqh al-Nikāh	Buyū	Total
True/False	150	150	150	450
MCQ	50	50	–	100
Total	200	200	150	550

Domain	Question (with English translation)	Correct answer
Tahārah	يجب تخليل أصابع القدمين في الوضوء. (It is obligatory to wash between the toes during wudhu.)	FALSE
	يجوز للمتميم أن يصلي فرضاً آخر بنفس التيمم. (It is permissible for the one who performed tayammum to pray another obligatory prayer with the same tayammum.)	FALSE
Fiqh Al-Nikāh	ذكر الصداق عند العقد شرط في صحة عقد الزواج. (Mentioning the dowry in the marriage contract is a condition for the validity of the contract.)	FALSE
	يندب أن يكون المهر كله معجلاً. (It is recommended that the entire dowry be paid in advance.)	TRUE
Buyū	يجوز اجتماع البيع والسلف من غير شرط على المعتمد. (According to the reliable opinion in the school, it is permissible to combine a sale and a loan without stipulation.)	TRUE
	يصح بيع العنب بالزبيب متماثلاً. (It is valid to sell fresh grapes for an equal amount of raisins.)	FALSE

Methodology

□ Models

- GPT-4o
- ALLaM-7B-Instruct

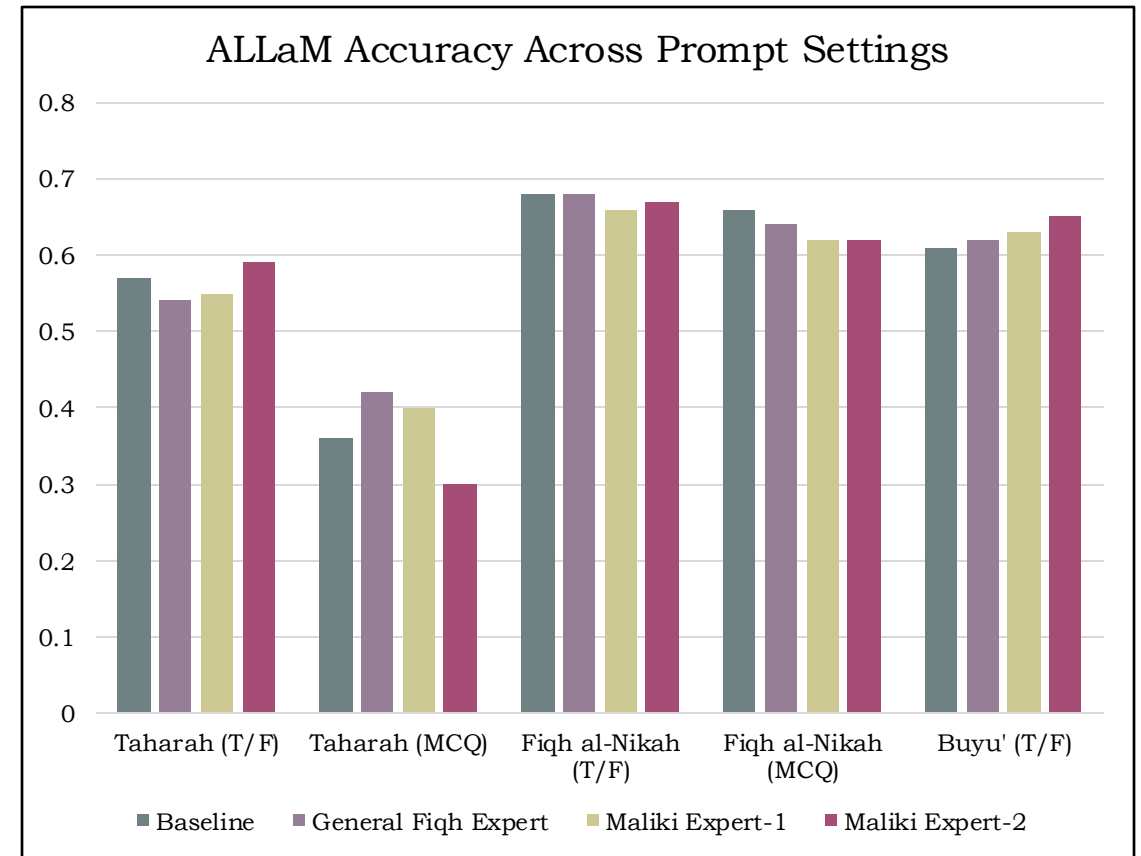
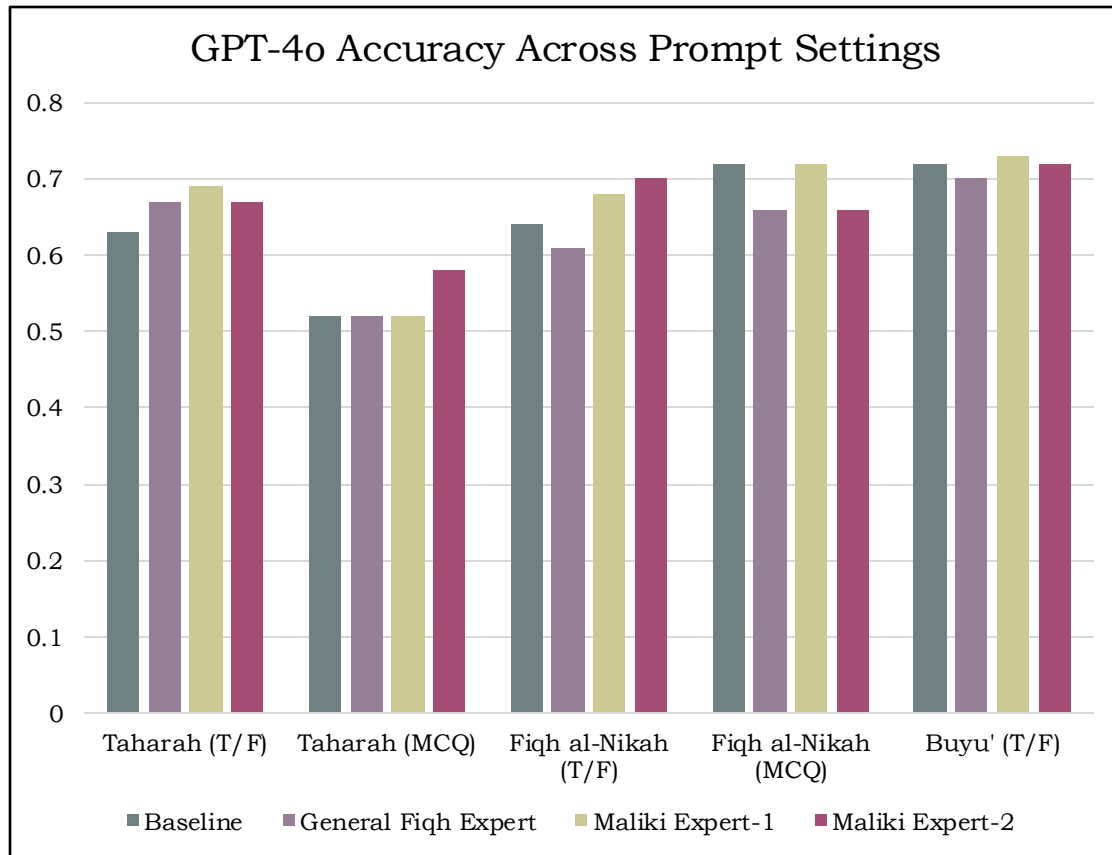
□ Prompt Engineering

- Baseline: No instructions.
- General Fiqh Expert: Act as a general Islamic Fiqh expert.
- Maliki Expert-1: Follow Maliki school principles.
- Maliki Expert-2 (strict): Rely solely on authoritative Maliki sources.

Table 4: Prompt settings used in the experiments

Setting	System Prompt (Arabic with English translation)
Baseline	None (no instruction provided)
General Fiqh Expert	أنت خبير في الفقه الإسلامي (You are an expert in Islamic Fiqh.)
Maliki Expert-1	أنت خبير في المذهب المالكي، وتحيب على الأسئلة بناءً على أصول وقواعد هذا المذهب (You are an expert in the Maliki school, and you answer questions based on its principles and rules.)
Maliki (strict) Expert-2	أنت فقيه متخصص في المذهب المالكي، ولا تعتمد في إجاباتك إلا على ما هو معتمد في كتب المذهب المالكي مثل أقرب المسالك والشرح الصغير والكبير. لا تستخدم آراء المذاهب الأخرى، ولا تقارن بينها، ولا تحيب إلا بما هو مشهور ومعتمد في المذهب المالكي فقط. إذا ورد سؤال يختلف فيه رأي المذهب المالكي عن غيره، فاختر الجواب الذي يمثل المذهب المالكي فقط، ولو خالف ما هو شائع في الفتاوى العامة أو المذاهب الأخرى. إذا لم يكن الجواب واضحاً في كتب المذهب فقل: لا يوجد نص صريح في المذهب، ولا تُحتمن من نفسك (You are an expert in the Maliki school, and you answer questions based on what is established in the authoritative Maliki sources, such as Aqrab al-Masālik, al-Sharh al-Saghir and al-Sharh al-Kabir. Do not use opinions from other schools, do not compare between them, and only mention what is well-known and adopted within the Maliki school. If a question involves an issue where the Maliki opinion differs from others, select only the answer that represents the Maliki view, even if it contradicts widely known fatwas or the positions of other. If the answer is not explicitly found in Maliki sources, state: "There is no explicit text in the school," and do not guess.)

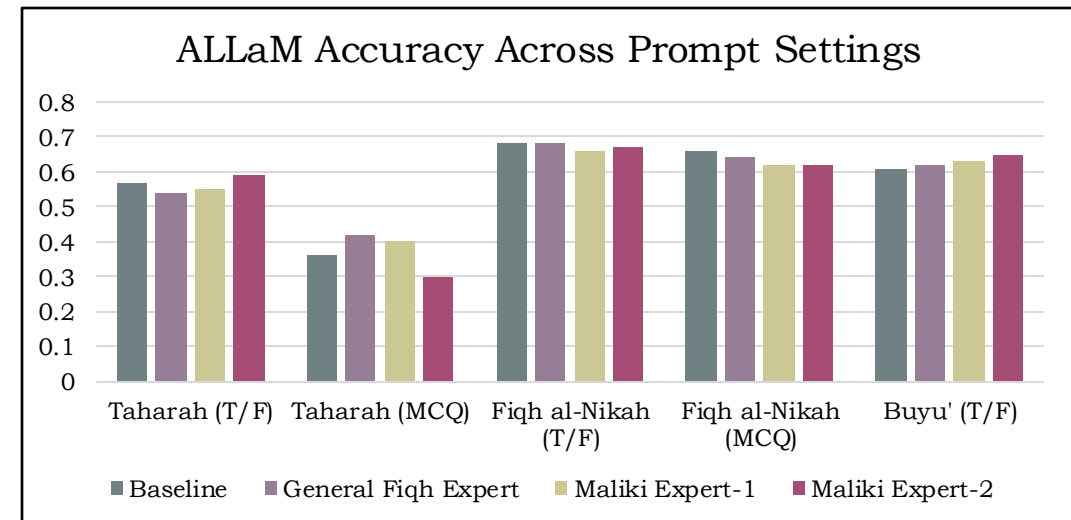
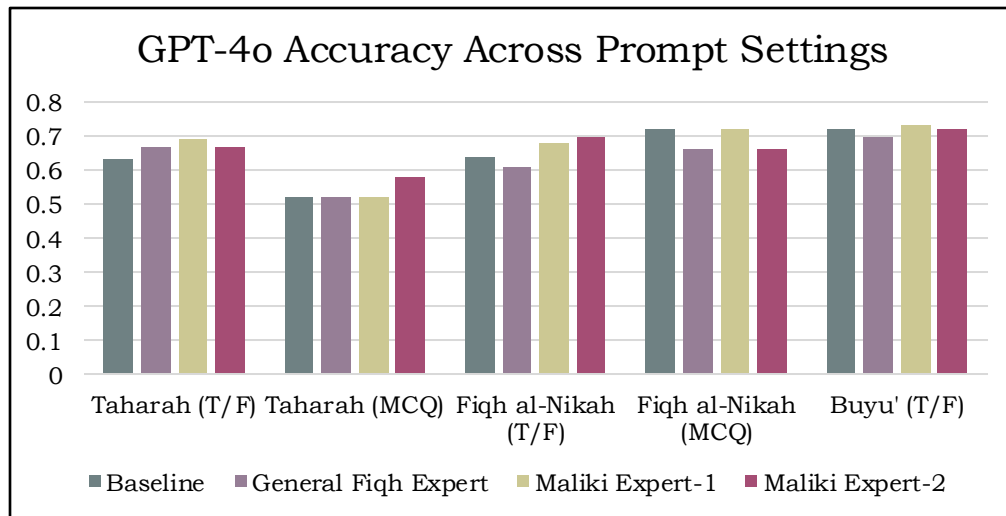
Results



GPT-4o and ALLaM performance across different prompts in three Islamic Fiqh domains

Results

- GPT-4o consistently outperformed ALLaM across all domains and prompt settings.
- Both models struggled most with Taharah—especially MCQs—indicating high topic complexity and limited training exposure.
- GPT-4o performed better with Maliki-aligned prompts.



GPT-4o and ALLaM performance across different prompts in three Islamic Fiqh domains

Conclusion

- LLMs show potential for assisting in Islamic jurisprudence research and education.
- However, current Arabic LLMs are not fully reliable for school-specific Fiqh reasoning without additional adaptation.
- LLMs should be used cautiously in sensitive religious contexts.
- Improving reliability requires domain adaptation, such as fine-tuning or RAG using authoritative sources, since current models lack the jurisprudential depth needed for school-aligned reasoning.