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Perceived Barriers to ChatGPT Integration in Islamic Studies Education: Insights from Malaysian International Students in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT: *This study explores the factors that limit Malaysian international students' interest in using ChatGPT as a learning tool for Islamic Studies in Indonesia. Employing a qualitative narrative inquiry design, data were collected through in-depth interviews with students who possess Islamic educational backgrounds. The findings indicate three key barriers. First, participants perceive ChatGPT as lacking scholarly authority and a valid chain of transmission (*sanad*), which is essential in legitimizing religious knowledge. Second, students reported concerns about the tool's limited ability to present accurate and contextualized religious evidence (*dalil*), requiring further verification from trusted sources. Third, apprehension arose regarding potential distortions in interpreting the Quran and Hadith, as proper exegesis requires mastery of Arabic,*

a thorough understanding of historical context, and adherence to established methodologies. To address these issues, respondents proposed integrating ChatGPT with recognized Islamic scholars and institutions, incorporating authentic primary sources, and adding reminders encouraging consultation with qualified scholars when engaging with complex religious questions.

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INTRODUCTION

ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence-based chatbot released in 2022, has experienced rapid growth, with the number of weekly active users reaching 100 million in November 2023 and surging to 200 million by August 2024 (Tech in Asia Indonesia, 2025). In Indonesia, the platform is also highly popular, ranking among the top ten countries with the highest number of users, accounting for 32% of the global total (Syaftahan, 2024). The main appeal of ChatGPT lies in its ability to generate human-like conversational text, its high accessibility, and its user-friendly interface (Sridhar, 2024). For international students studying Islamic Studies, ChatGPT offers potential as an additional learning resource for independently understanding religious concepts, Islamic history, and verse interpretations (Ikhwan & Aan, 2025). However, concerns over the validity of the information provided raise doubts about the accuracy of religious teachings, leading some students to hesitate in using it for Islamic studies (Hadziq et al., 2024). This highlights the importance of research into the barriers to ChatGPT adoption in Islamic studies among international students. Understanding these obstacles is crucial for educational institutions to develop strategies that support the effective and responsible use of ChatGPT, aligning with Islamic scholarly principles and students' academic needs (Erizal et al., 2024).

The research trend on the use of ChatGPT in Islamic Studies suggests that scholars are primarily focused on exploring the potential and implementation of this artificial intelligence technology in the context of Islamic education. For instance, Setiawati, Nasri, and Amalia (2024) highlight how ChatGPT can be utilized as an assistive tool in Islamic Religious Education to enhance students' comprehension. Similarly, a study by Muttaqin (2023) emphasizes the importance of integrating artificial intelligence to introduce more interactive and personalized learning methods. Additionally, Suhendi et al. (2024) explore ChatGPT's capability in designing Islamic Studies learning materials relevant to contemporary needs. On the other hand, Faizin, Maarif, and Hanafi (2025) discuss

ChatGPT's role in promoting religious moderation through Islamic legal analysis, while Khairunisa (2024) examines its use as a medium for Islamic preaching on platforms like YouTube. However, despite numerous studies investigating ChatGPT's positive potential, the factors hindering interest in using this technology for Islamic studies remain largely unexplored. These challenges include limited access to technology, a lack of digital literacy among students and educators, and concerns about the validity of AI-generated religious information (Saputra, 2023). Further research is needed to identify and address these barriers to ensure the optimal and inclusive implementation of ChatGPT in Islamic Studies learning.

This study aims to identify the factors that hinder the interest of international students from Malaysia in using ChatGPT as a learning resource for Islamic Studies and to explore the solutions they propose to overcome these challenges. The research was conducted at the State Islamic University (UIN) of Salatiga, Indonesia, as this institution has a diverse international student community, including students from Malaysia, and a strong focus on integrating religious scholarship with modern technology. This makes UIN Salatiga an ideal location for examining how international students perceive the use of technology, such as ChatGPT, in religious education. The study seeks to answer two main questions: first, what are the key factors contributing to the low interest in using ChatGPT as a religious learning tool—whether related to trust issues regarding information accuracy, technological literacy limitations, or cultural and religious factors; second, what solutions do respondents offer to address these challenges? This research advances beyond Fihris (2018) study by employing a narrative inquiry approach, which allows researchers to deeply explore respondents' personal experiences through their stories and narratives. This approach offers a comprehensive portrayal of how individuals perceive technology within the context of religiosity, enriching the findings in substance compared to traditional quantitative methods. The urgency and significance of this research stem from the rapid development of artificial intelligence technology, while the literature on integrating this technology into religious education remains limited.

LITERATURE REVIEW

ChatGPT as a Constructive AI in Education

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies such as ChatGPT in education has demonstrated significant potential as a constructive learning tool. As a large language model based on AI, ChatGPT enables students to access information quickly and accurately, supports problem-solving processes, and provides interactive explanations of academic concepts. This aligns with the principles of positive psychology, which emphasize the development of individual strengths such as learning motivation, self-confidence, and adaptability to environmental changes (Biber & Davis, 2024). Moreover, the use of ChatGPT can enhance student engagement in the learning process due to its responsive and personalized nature, tailored to users' needs.

In the context of modern education, ChatGPT also facilitates access to quality education for marginalized groups or those living in remote areas through easily accessible digital platforms. However, challenges remain, such as the risk of over-reliance on technology and a potential decline in creativity if not used wisely. Therefore, it is crucial for educators and curriculum developers to design balanced integration strategies that combine technological and humanistic approaches, ensuring the achievement of holistic educational goals.

Furthermore, from the perspective of character development and mental well-being, ChatGPT has the potential to serve as a tool for delivering positive psychological interventions. Research suggests that AI-based technologies can be utilized to improve mental health, build resilience, and encourage prosocial behaviors among students (Ottenbreit-Leftwich et al., 2023). For instance, ChatGPT can be designed to provide reflective exercises, relaxation techniques, or activities that promote positive habits relevant to students' age and educational level. Its application in education can also support the implementation of a positive psychology framework encompassing essential elements such as positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment, along with additional aspects like physical health, future focus, flow, and flexibility. Nevertheless, content validation and data security remain critical issues that must be addressed to prevent negative impacts on students' emotional and moral development.

ChatGPT contributes to enhancing the effectiveness of collaborative and project-based learning methods. Studies have shown that ChatGPT can assist students in constructing arguments, analyzing data, and developing critical thinking skills through continuous dialogue (Furey & Martin, 2019). Teachers can also utilize this technology to create more dynamic and engaging teaching materials, including exam questions, daily lesson plans, and instant feedback for students. Additionally, ChatGPT has the potential to increase inclusivity in education by providing specialized support for students with special needs or those experiencing emotional and behavioral disorders (Zhang et al., 2018; Guo, 2019). However, clear regulations and usage guidelines are necessary to ensure that the benefits of this technology are maximized without compromising critical and ethical considerations in education.

ChatGPT in Learning Islamic Studies

The utilization of ChatGPT in the study of Islamic education opens new opportunities for introducing technology as a supportive medium for understanding religious values in a contextual and innovative manner. With its ability to process and analyze religious texts, ChatGPT can be used to explain Quranic verses, Hadith, and classical Islamic literature using systematic linguistic and historical approaches. This is particularly beneficial in helping students grasp deeper meanings of religious teachings, especially in relation to contemporary issues such as Islamic economics, bioethics, and human rights from an Islamic perspective. Furthermore, ChatGPT can translate religious documents from Arabic or Persian into local languages with high accuracy, thus facilitating information access for non-expert communities. However, it is important to

ensure that interpretations provided by AI remain consistent with Sharia principles and do not deviate from historically accepted contexts and scholarly interpretations (Furey & Martin, 2019).

From the perspective of positive psychology, ChatGPT can also serve as a supplementary tool in shaping religious character and building mental resilience aligned with Islamic values. As outlined in various positive psychology literature, education that focuses on strengthening internal strengths, such as optimism, gratitude, and patience, plays a crucial role in enhancing students' well-being (Yang, 2019). In the context of Islamic studies, ChatGPT can be designed to offer spiritual advice based on the Quran and Sunnah, assist students in practicing daily prayers, or provide weekly reflections on Islamic moral values. Additionally, this technology can be employed in mental and emotional development programs to help students navigate modern life pressures while preserving their Islamic identity. Nevertheless, guidance from educators or religious figures remains essential to ensure that AI does not replace the human role in spiritual and moral formation.

Moreover, in practical implementation within Islamic educational institutions, ChatGPT can enhance the overall quality of teaching and educational services. For example, the technology can assist teachers in developing syllabi, creating interactive learning modules, or providing immediate feedback after students complete specific tasks. It can also facilitate online discussions on Islamic topics through question-and-answer formats that resemble direct dialogue (Biber & Davis, 2024), thereby increasing student participation and making learning more active and student-centered.

However, the main challenge lies in ensuring that the content generated by AI is free from interpretative bias, culturally sensitive, and relevant to both local and global contexts. Thus, collaboration between technology experts, Islamic scholars, and educators is essential in designing and overseeing the use of ChatGPT in Islamic studies, ensuring that it remains grounded in noble religious values and the lofty goals of education.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach, utilizing the Narrative Inquiry method, to analyze the factors that hinder Malaysian international students' interest in using ChatGPT as an Islamic learning aid. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, where the chosen researcher respondents were based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives, namely, Malaysian international students currently studying at one of the universities in Indonesia. This selection aimed to obtain in-depth data from individuals with firsthand experience related to the research topic. Participants were chosen based on their availability and willingness to share their experiences and perspectives on using ChatGPT in Islamic education (Sugiarto & Suhono, 2023). A total of six students were selected as participants, with each individual assigned an anonymous code (IM1 to IM6) to ensure confidentiality. The interview process was conducted in two stages: first, a 120-minute group interview to foster rapport

and gain an initial understanding of their experiences; second, one-on-one face-to-face interviews lasting 20–30 minutes per individual to delve deeper into each participant's perspective. Data were collected through audio recordings using a smartphone, and participants provided verbal consent for data publication under the condition that their personal information would not be disclosed (Achjar et al., 2023). The interviews were conducted in Malay to ensure effective communication and later transliterated into Indonesian.

Table 1: Informant Profile

Participant Code	Educational Country	Age Group	Gender	Citizenship	Interview Duration (Minutes)
IM1	Indonesia	23 years	Man	Malaysia	120 (group) + 25 (individual)
IM2	Indonesia	24 years	Woman	Malaysia	120 (group) + 30 (individual)
IM3	Indonesia	24 years	Man	Malaysia	120 (group) + 20 (individual)
IM4	Indonesia	21 years	Woman	Malaysia	120 (group) + 28 (individual)
IM5	Indonesia	22 years	Man	Malaysia	120 (group) + 22 (individual)
IM6	Indonesia	24 years	Woman	Malaysia	120 (group) + 27 (individual)

The use of the Narrative Inquiry method in this study allows researchers to explore participants' life stories deeply and contextual manner (lyin, 2006). This method is highly suitable for investigating complex personal experiences, such as the barriers to using technology like ChatGPT. The data obtained through interviews not only include direct answers to the researchers' questions but also involve participants' interpretations of their own experiences. This provides a holistic view of how Malaysian international students perceive ChatGPT as a learning aid for Islamic Studies (Sarmini et al., 2024). During the data analysis process, interview recordings are transcribed and analyzed to identify recurring key themes. Researchers also consider cultural, social, and educational contexts that influence participants' perceptions. This approach ensures that the research findings go beyond statistical descriptions, presenting narratives rich in meaning and offering readers in-depth insights into the dynamics of technology use in religious education.

To ensure data accuracy and reliability, validation techniques are carried out through source and method triangulation (Nunes et al., 2019). Source triangulation is conducted by collecting data from various respondents with similar academic backgrounds, specifically Malaysian students studying in Indonesia. Meanwhile, method triangulation is implemented by combining in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the studied phenomenon. Additionally, member checking is

performed by presenting initial findings to several respondents to ensure that the researchers' interpretations align with their experiences (Rosmita et al., 2024). The data analysis technique used follows Miles and Huberman's model, which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, information from various sources is filtered to focus on key themes relevant to the research objectives. In the data presentation stage, the refined data is organized into narratives, tables, or diagrams for easier comprehension. Finally, in the conclusion-drawing stage, emerging patterns are identified and interpreted to answer the research questions. Through this approach, this study aims to provide a comprehensive and systematic understanding of the factors influencing Malaysian students' interest in utilizing ChatGPT in the context of Islamic Studies learning.

RESULTS

Main Factors Causing the Low Interest of International Students in Using ChatGPT for Islamic Studies

This study reveals that the low interest of Malaysian international students in utilizing ChatGPT for Islamic Studies is driven by three main factors. First, the lack of scholarly authority with a recognized chain of transmission (sanad). In Islamic tradition, religious knowledge is transmitted through a chain of trusted scholars or teachers. Since ChatGPT lacks sanad and does not originate from a clear scholarly source, students are doubtful about the validity of the information it provides. The second factor is ChatGPT's limitation in accurately and contextually presenting religious evidence (dalil). Students often find that the information generated by ChatGPT requires further verification, reducing their trust in the platform as a reliable source for religious learning. Third, students are concerned about the potential distortion of Quranic and Hadith interpretations. A deep understanding of Islamic texts requires mastery of Arabic, comprehension of historical contexts, and appropriate exegetical methodologies. ChatGPT is perceived as unable to meet these standards, making it prone to misinterpretations. These three factors significantly shape students' perceptions of ChatGPT, ultimately decreasing their willingness to use it for Islamic Studies. This study highlights the importance of an authentic and in-depth scholarly approach in religious learning technology to cater to the diverse needs of students.

1.   Lack of Scholarly Authority with Sanad

Narrative analysis from the informants indicates that students distrust ChatGPT's religious information due to its lack of scholarly authority with sanad. In Islamic tradition, religious knowledge is acquired through a clear chain of transmission from teachers or scholars who possess a recognized sanad. IM1 stated, "Sanad is like a chain that connects us to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), ensuring the authenticity of the knowledge we learn." This view is reinforced by IM2, who added, "Without sanad, we don't know the source of the knowledge it could be incorrect or even a religious innovation (bid'ah)." IM3 continued, "ChatGPT does not have a clear chain of knowledge transmission,

making it difficult to trust its accuracy." Meanwhile, IM4 emphasized, "Religious knowledge is not just about texts; it is also about how those texts are transmitted in a valid manner." IM5 further explained, "The sanad-based religious education system has been tested for centuries, whereas technology like ChatGPT is still new and unverified." The absence of sanad leads students to believe that ChatGPT cannot replace the role of teachers in the process of religious knowledge transmission. This skepticism arises because students seek certainty regarding the validity of the information they learn, especially in matters related to faith and religious practices.

Students' distrust of ChatGPT arises from the absence of scholarly authority with a clear chain of transmission. IM6 stated, "I doubt ChatGPT's answers because I don't know who validates the information." IM1 added, "The information provided by ChatGPT sometimes appears convincing, but we don't know if it aligns with true Islamic teachings." IM2 continued, "There is a lot of incorrect religious information on the internet, and ChatGPT could be among those sources." IM3 emphasized, "Since no Islamic scholar is responsible for ChatGPT's content, I don't feel safe using its information." IM4 shared a similar view, saying, "The validity of religious information is crucial, and ChatGPT cannot guarantee that." These concerns highlight that students need sources of knowledge that are more trustworthy than AI technology. They tend to prefer sources with clear scholarly authority, such as Islamic scholars or widely recognized foundational texts within the Islamic tradition. This indicates that the validity of information is a key factor in students' decisions to trust a source.

The method of knowledge transmission in Islam differs significantly from how AI technology like ChatGPT operates. IM5 explained, "In Islam, knowledge is directly taught by a teacher to a student, with a deep understanding of its context." IM6 added, "ChatGPT only processes data without grasping the profound meaning behind religious texts." IM1 emphasized, "Religious learning is not merely the transfer of information but also the development of character and spiritual understanding." IM2 agreed, stating, "AI cannot provide advice or spiritual guidance like an Islamic scholar does." IM3 elaborated, "The teaching of religion involves human interaction filled with empathy, whereas ChatGPT only generates responses based on algorithms." These differences make students feel that ChatGPT is less relevant to religious learning. They prefer learning methods that involve direct interaction with teachers or scholars because, in addition to acquiring knowledge, they also receive moral and spiritual guidance that technology cannot provide. IM1 stated,

> "In the context of teaching the Al-Quran and Hadith, I think ChatGPT is less relevant as a reference. The knowledge they provide is not grounded and does not involve direct interaction with religious teachers, even though this position of moral and spiritual guidance cannot be provided by technology."

The use of ChatGPT in the context of Islamic religious studies poses serious risks due to the absence of *sanad* (a chain of narration ensuring authenticity). IM4 stated, "I am very worried that if my friends rely on ChatGPT, they might fall into

serious misunderstandings." IM5 added, "For example, when asked to explain inheritance law, ChatGPT may provide answers that do not align with *fiqh* principles because it does not refer to primary Islamic legal texts." IM6 continued, "Another example is when ChatGPT provides explanations about *hadith*, it might mix *sahih* hadith with *da'if* hadith, which is dangerous for public understanding." IM1 emphasized, "The greatest risk is the spread of misinformation or even content that contradicts Islamic teachings." IM2 added, "Students must be cautious because ChatGPT lacks a filter to ensure the accuracy of religious information." Using ChatGPT without a deep understanding may lead to fatal errors in worship practices or beliefs.

A real example of the dangers of using ChatGPT in Islamic studies occurred when a student asked about the ruling on fasting during Ramadan for pregnant women. IM2 stated, "ChatGPT gave a brief response that pregnant women are allowed to skip fasting without explaining the requirements for *qadha* or *fidyah*." IM3 added, "Such an answer can be misleading because scholars typically provide context and detailed conditions." IM4 continued, "In another case, when asked about a specific prayer, ChatGPT provided a supplication that had no basis in the Qur'an or *hadith*, merely a compilation from online sources." IM5 asserted, "This is dangerous because students might practice the supplication without knowing its validity." IM6 added, "The end result is the spread of worship practices that do not align with authentic Islamic teachings." These examples demonstrate that ChatGPT can be misleading when used without a proper understanding.

Figure 1: Screenshot document obtained from IM2

ChatGPT ∨   Memori Penuh ⓘ

is it permissible for pregnant women not to fast

Yes, pregnant women may not fast if it poses a risk to their health or the baby's well-being.

ChatGPT presents religious information based on data processed from the internet, but the sources are often unclear or do not originate from authentic primary sources. IM1 stated, "ChatGPT does not always refer to parent books such as Sahih Bukhari or Sahih Muslim, but to online articles that may not be verified." IM2 added, "A lot of religious information on the internet is incomplete or even wrong, and ChatGPT only repeats what is already there." IM3 continued, "For example, when asked about the interpretation of a particular verse, ChatGPT may provide an answer that is not in accordance with the interpretation of great scholars such as Ibn Kathir or Al-Qurtubi." IM4 emphasized, "Because ChatGPT does not have access to parent books that are not available on the internet, the answers become doubtful." IM5 added, "This makes students tend not to believe

in the religious information provided by ChatGPT." Unclear sources of information make ChatGPT less suitable for use in religious learning.

Figure 2: Chat GPT does not provide references (IM2 Document)
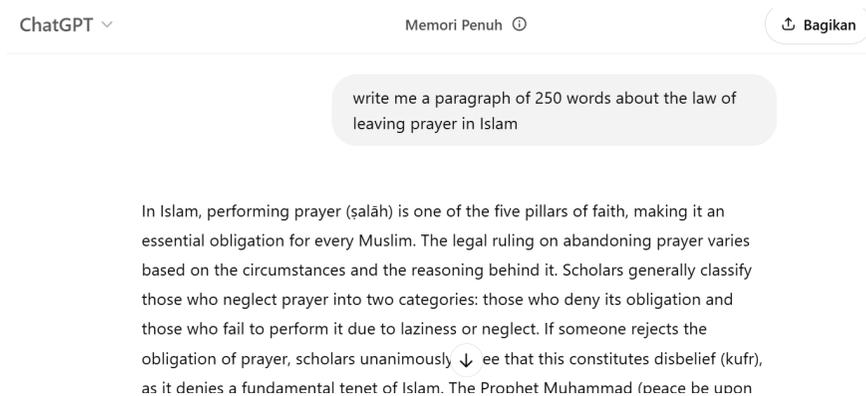
Although ChatGPT is convenient, students prefer to learn religion from teachers or scholars. IM3 stated, "Learning from scholars gives a sense of calm because they have a clear sanad." IM4 added, "Direct interaction with teachers allows us to ask deeper questions and get more personal explanations." IM5 continued, "Ulama not only provide answers, but also guide us in facing life's challenges." IM6 emphasized, "The existence of scholars as heirs of the prophet is very important in maintaining the continuity of religious knowledge." IM1 added, "Teachers or scholars have spiritual experiences that cannot be replaced by technology." This preference shows that scientific authority with sanad remains the main choice in religious learning. Students feel that learning from scholars provides a depth of understanding and moral guidance that technology such as ChatGPT cannot.

Limitations in Presenting Accurate and Contextual Religious Evidence

This study also found that international students from Malaysia have begun to recognize ChatGPT's limitations in accurately presenting religious evidence. IM1 stated, "I often find inaccurate answers when asking about Islamic law." IM2 added, "Some of the hadiths mentioned do not always match their original sources." IM3 observed, "ChatGPT sometimes provides explanations that are too general and lack depth." IM4 argued, "Not all Quranic verses cited align with the context of my question." IM5 emphasized, "The accuracy of religious evidence is crucial, yet ChatGPT has not fully met this standard." This awareness has made students more cautious when using the platform as a reference. They have started to see the need for additional verification to ensure the accuracy of the information provided by ChatGPT. IM6 highlighted, "Technology like this is helpful, but it cannot be the sole learning source." IM1 continued, "We need a more precise tool for studying religious evidence." IM2 added, "As religious students, we cannot accept information without confirmation from authentic sources." IM3 stressed,

"Even minor errors in presenting religious evidence can have a significant impact on understanding." IM4 concluded, "That's why I always compare ChatGPT's answers with more reliable reference books." Thus, ChatGPT's limitations pose a major challenge for students in their learning process.

When students request specific Quranic verses or hadiths, ChatGPT's responses often do not align with their requests. IM6 revealed, "I asked for a verse about zakat mal, but ChatGPT provided a verse about charity." IM1 added, "There was a mismatch between my question about the hadith on Tarawih prayer and the answer given." IM2 pointed out, "ChatGPT sometimes provides the correct verse, but it is not relevant to the question's context." IM3 argued, "I once asked for a hadith about fasting on Mondays and Thursdays, but it gave me a hadith about obligatory fasting." IM4 asserted, "This inconsistency makes me hesitant to use its answers without cross-referencing with other sources." The inaccuracy in providing specific religious evidence is one of ChatGPT's major weaknesses. IM5 explained, "Religious evidence must be highly specific, yet ChatGPT often provides generalized answers." IM6 added, "I worry that relying solely on ChatGPT could lead to misunderstandings." IM1 continued, "The context of the question is crucial, but ChatGPT often overlooks it." IM2 pointed out, "This indicates that AI technology has not yet fully grasped the complexity of religious evidence." IM3 concluded, "We need a learning tool that is more sensitive to the needs of religious education."

Students also found that ChatGPT's interpretation of the Qur'an often appeared superficial and inconsistent with primary sources such as Tafsir Ibn Kathir. IM5 stated, "The explanations provided are very general and lack depth." IM6 added, "When I asked about Surah Al-Baqarah verse 286, ChatGPT's response did not align with the explanation in Tafsir Ibn Kathir." IM1 pointed out, "The interpretations given tend to be oversimplified without referencing classical scholars' opinions." IM2 expressed concern, saying, "I worry that if I rely solely on ChatGPT, my understanding could be incorrect." IM3 asserted, "Qur'anic interpretation must be based on authentic sources, not mere generalizations." IM4 added, "These generalizations make the interpretations appear shallow and lack nuance." IM5 continued, "Qur'anic exegesis requires in-depth analysis, but ChatGPT often provides overly brief explanations." IM6 highlighted, "Some responses even lack any references at all." IM1 concluded, "This indicates that ChatGPT is not yet mature enough to be used for Qur'anic exegesis studies." IM2 emphasized, "Without clear references, these interpretations cannot be considered reliable."

In addition to Qur'anic evidence, the hadiths presented by ChatGPT also frequently lack clear chains of narration, and their context often does not align with the intended meaning. IM4 commented, "The hadith texts provided often do not include the name of the narrator or the source of the narration." IM5 added, "I once asked for a hadith about speech etiquette, but what I received was a hadith about respecting one's parents." IM6 pointed out, "The context of the hadiths given is often inconsistent with my question." IM1 stated, "A hadith without a clear narration chain is difficult to verify for authenticity." IM2 asserted, "This inaccuracy makes me reluctant to use ChatGPT as a source for hadith." IM3

added, "The chain of narration is crucial to determine whether a hadith is authentic or weak." IM4 continued, "However, ChatGPT often overlooks this aspect." IM5 noted, "Some hadiths provided are not even relevant to the requested topic." IM6 concluded, "This shows that ChatGPT does not yet fully understand the structure of hadith." IM1 stressed, "We need a more meticulous tool for presenting hadiths to prevent misleading users."

One of the other issues encountered by students is ChatGPT's tendency to use the same verses to respond to different prompts in various contexts. IM3 stated, "Certain verses, such as Surah Al-Ma'idah verse 3, are frequently used for multiple unrelated questions." IM4 added, "ChatGPT tends to randomly pick verses without considering their context." IM5 highlighted, "I once asked about inheritance law, but ChatGPT provided a verse about social justice." IM6 revealed, "This demonstrates ChatGPT's lack of understanding of the diversity of Quranic references." IM1 emphasized, "The improper use of verses will only mislead users." IM2 continued, "Each verse has its own context, yet ChatGPT often disregards this." IM3 added, "This makes me hesitant to immediately rely on the given answers." IM4 pointed out, "ChatGPT seems to rely solely on a general database without considering specificity." IM5 concluded, "We need a more intelligent tool that can select verses appropriate to the context of the question." IM6 stressed, "Randomly selecting verses will only undermine the integrity of religious learning."

Due to ChatGPT's limitations in presenting religious references, students feel the need to conduct additional verification of the information provided. IM5 stated, "I always compare ChatGPT's answers with reference books I own." IM6 added, "Verification is a mandatory step to avoid misunderstandings about religious references." IM1 revealed, "I often seek my lecturer's or an ustaz's opinion after receiving an answer from ChatGPT." IM2 emphasized, "There is no guarantee of accuracy from ChatGPT, so I must put in extra effort." IM3 highlighted, "This verification process takes time, but it is crucial for ensuring the truth of the information." IM4 continued, "We cannot accept answers without first checking their validity." IM5 added, "Verification also helps me gain a deeper understanding of religious references." IM6 concluded, "This step is the best way to avoid critical mistakes." IM1 pointed out, "Verification is the responsibility of every religious studies student." IM2 stressed, "The accuracy of religious references is the top priority in religious education."

Despite its limitations, students still hope that ChatGPT can be further developed in the future. IM2 stated, "I hope ChatGPT can be more accurate in presenting religious arguments." IM3 added, "AI should be programmed with cultural and religious sensitivity in mind." IM4 expressed, "Developing a more comprehensive database would be very helpful." IM5 emphasized, "Collaboration with religious experts can improve the quality of ChatGPT's answers." IM6 concluded, "If improved, ChatGPT could be a great tool." IM1 continued, "We need more precise technology to study religious arguments." IM2 added, "These improvements will make ChatGPT more useful for religious students." IM3 highlighted, "We want ChatGPT to be a reliable tool." IM4 concluded, "With further development, ChatGPT could be a solution to the challenges of modern

religious learning." IM5 emphasized, "This hope encourages us to remain optimistic about technological progress."

Concerns About the Potential Distortion of Quranic and Hadith Interpretation

The primary concern among students regarding ChatGPT is its limited proficiency in modeling the Arabic language. IM1 stated, "ChatGPT does not have deep knowledge of Arabic, so I worry that its interpretation of the Qur'an could be incorrect." This was reinforced by IM2, who added, "Arabic is very complex; even a small grammatical mistake can completely change the meaning." IM3 also expressed, "I am not confident that an AI model can accurately understand the context of words in the Qur'an." IM4 highlighted, "AI cannot distinguish between literal and contextual meanings in religious texts." IM5 further stated, "My main concern is that AI-generated interpretations could be mistaken as absolute truth." These concerns reflect a general distrust in the ability of technology to accurately interpret Arabic without human intervention. Arabic, as the original language of the Qur'an, has a unique grammatical structure and rhetorical style, requiring deep understanding to avoid distortions in meaning. Additionally, Arabic often contains implicit meanings that are not easily comprehensible to algorithm-based systems. IM6 added, "AI lacks human intuition to grasp the depth of the Arabic language." IM1 reiterated, "Errors in understanding Arabic can have a significant impact on Qur'anic interpretation." IM2 continued, "Mastery of Arabic must be based on deep knowledge of nahwu (syntax), sharaf (morphology), and balaghah (rhetoric)." IM3 concluded, "Without a proper understanding of Arabic, the interpretation of the Qur'an could be far from its original intent."

Beyond the Arabic language, historical context plays a crucial role in the interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith. IM6 emphasized, "AI does not have the capability to understand the historical background in which the verses were revealed." IM1 added, "Interpretation without historical context can lead to major misunderstandings." IM2 agreed, stating, "The social and cultural context during the time of Prophet Muhammad greatly influenced the meaning of the texts." IM3 elaborated, "AI cannot reference historical events relevant to the texts." IM4 concluded, "Without understanding history, interpretations can be shallow and incomplete." For example, interpreting Surah Al-Baqarah without understanding the situation of Bani Israil would result in an inadequate comprehension. IM5 added, "History helps us understand the moral messages in the Qur'an." IM6 continued, "AI cannot extract profound meanings without understanding the historical context." IM1 asserted, "Historical context is key to understanding the purpose behind the revelation of verses." IM2 concluded, "Without context, interpretations can become biased and misaligned with Allah's intended meaning."

The proper methodology of exegesis is the key to understanding the Qur'an and hadith. IM5 stated, "AI does not employ a systematic exegesis methodology like the scholars do." IM6 added, "The methods of tafsir bi al-ma'tsur and bi al-ra'yi require deep understanding, which AI lacks." IM1 expressed, "Exegesis methodology is the foundation for ensuring accurate interpretation." IM2

continued, "Without a clear methodology, the results of exegesis can become subjective." IM3 emphasized, "AI is incapable of distinguishing between strong and weak opinions in exegesis." The methodology of exegesis requires in-depth analysis, including references to authentic sources such as hadith and the views of classical scholars. IM4 added, "AI cannot take into account the opinions of scholars who are recognized for their expertise." IM5 continued, "Exegesis must be conducted carefully and based on well-established methods." IM6 concluded by stating, "The methodology of exegesis serves as a safeguard against errors in understanding the Qur'an." IM1 reaffirmed, "Without methodology, exegesis can become speculative and invalid."

Hadith, as the second source of Islamic law, is also susceptible to distortion if interpreted by AI. IM4 stated, "AI cannot correctly verify the authenticity of a hadith." IM5 added, "Understanding the chain of transmission (sanad) and the text (matan) of hadith requires specialized expertise that AI does not possess." IM6 expressed concern, saying, "I fear that AI may quote fabricated hadiths without realizing it." IM1 continued, "Hadith must be analyzed based on strict principles of hadith sciences." IM2 concluded by stating, "Errors in selecting hadith can have detrimental effects on religious understanding." Hadith has a complex structure, including its chain of transmission (sanad) and textual content (matan), which require thorough analysis. IM3 added, "AI cannot distinguish between sahih, hasan, and da'if hadiths." IM4 continued, "Hadith verification requires knowledge of the science of rijal al-hadith (biographical evaluation of narrators)." IM5 concluded by stating, "AI lacks the ability to perform takhrij al-hadith (hadith authentication)." IM6 emphasized, "Interpreting hadith carelessly can mislead the Muslim community."

Generalization in the interpretation of the Qur'an and hadith is also a concern among students. IM3 stated, "AI tends to provide general answers without considering specific contexts." IM4 added, "Not all verses or hadiths can be applied universally." IM5 expressed, "Generalization can lead to major misunderstandings of Islamic teachings." IM6 continued, "Each verse or hadith has its own context that must be deeply understood." IM1 concluded with the statement, "AI cannot distinguish between individual and general cases." Generalization in interpretation can result in the application of laws that do not align with specific situations. IM2 added, "Specific context is crucial in interpreting verses or hadiths." IM3 continued, "AI cannot differentiate between general and specific legal rulings." IM4 concluded with, "Generalization can reduce the complexity of Islamic teachings." IM5 emphasized, "Interpretation must always consider context and circumstances."

The use of technology without expert supervision is also a major concern. IM2 stated, "AI must be used under the supervision of scholars or religious experts." IM3 added, "Without supervision, AI-generated results can be misused." IM4 expressed, "AI is not a substitute for scholars in interpreting religious texts." IM5 continued, "Expert supervision is necessary to ensure accurate interpretations." IM6 concluded with, "Technology should serve as a tool, not the primary source of religious knowledge." Expert oversight is essential to ensure that AI-generated information is not misleading. IM1 added, "AI can only serve

as an aid, not a replacement for scholars." IM2 continued, "Expert supervision helps minimize the risk of misinterpretation." IM3 concluded with, "Without supervision, AI can become a source of interpretive distortion." IM4 emphasized, "Scholars have the authority to understand Islamic texts." IM5 continued, "AI must be used cautiously and wisely." Furthermore, IM6 explained, "AI lacks the ability to distinguish between strong and weak opinions in interpretation." IM1 reiterated, "Scholarly supervision is the best way to ensure that AI provides answers aligned with Islamic teachings." IM2 added, "The presence of scholars as guides will prevent AI from being used speculatively." IM3 concluded with, "The younger generation needs guidance to avoid becoming entirely dependent on technology." These concerns highlight that students recognize the importance of human involvement in directing the use of technology.

The negative impact on the younger generation is also a concern for students. IM1 stated, "The younger generation can be influenced by misinformation from AI." IM2 added, "They may consider the results of AI as absolute truth." IM3 said, "Distortion of interpretation can lead to misunderstanding of Islamic teachings." IM4 continued, "Religious education must be based on trusted sources." IM5 concluded by stating, "AI can be misleading if not used wisely." The younger generation who do not yet have a deep understanding of religion are vulnerable to misinformation. IM6 added, "AI can worsen religious understanding if used without guidance." IM1 continued, "The younger generation needs true and accurate religious education." IM2 concluded by stating, "AI cannot replace the role of teachers in religious learning." IM3 emphasized, "Religious education must involve direct interaction with scholars." IM4 continued, "AI should be used as a complement, not a substitute for conventional religious education." In addition, IM5 highlighted, "The younger generation tends to trust modern technology more than traditional sources." IM6 continued, "This can cause them to ignore the authentic values in Islamic teachings." IM1 concluded by stating, "The use of AI in religious learning must be balanced with moral guidance." IM2 added, "We need to ensure that technology does not damage the spiritual foundation of the younger generation." IM3 emphasized, "Religious education must remain a top priority in shaping the character of the younger generation."

What solutions do they offer?

IM5 proposed, "ChatGPT should be equipped with a warning feature that reminds users to consult scholars on complex religious matters." IM6 added, "This feature is essential to prevent users from drawing incorrect conclusions." IM1 agreed, stating, "Such warnings can prevent misunderstandings regarding religious laws." IM2 emphasized that "in intricate fiqh issues, referring to scholars is a necessity." IM3 asserted, "This warning message will help users remain aware of AI's limitations." This warning feature is expected to raise user awareness about the importance of consulting religious experts. With this feature, users will be more cautious in interpreting ChatGPT's responses, especially in religious matters that often require in-depth and contextual explanations. Furthermore, it will serve as a reminder that AI technology is not a substitute for Islamic scholarly authority

but rather a tool that should be used wisely. Through these warning messages, users will be more motivated to seek further clarification from credible sources, such as scholars or Islamic institutions. This will minimize the risk of misinterpretation, which could lead to incorrect religious understanding. Therefore, this warning feature serves as a crucial solution to maintaining the integrity of religious information conveyed through ChatGPT.

IM4 explained, "ChatGPT should include a database of official fatwas from reputable Islamic institutions." IM5 added, "These fatwas can serve as a safer and more reliable reference." IM6 suggested, "Content based on official fatwas will help users better understand religious laws." IM1 emphasized, "Official fatwas hold higher authority than personal interpretations." IM2 further stated, "By incorporating official fatwas, ChatGPT can become a more reliable educational platform." Strengthening content based on official fatwas will enhance ChatGPT's credibility as a religious learning tool. Official fatwas issued by Islamic institutions such as the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) or Darul Ifta hold widely recognized authority. By integrating these fatwas into ChatGPT's database, users will receive responses that align more closely with Islamic scholarly principles. Moreover, official fatwas often consider relevant social and cultural contexts, making them more applicable to daily life. Utilizing official fatwas will also minimize the risk of misinformation arising from personal interpretations or unverified sources. Thus, reinforcing fatwa-based content is a strategic step to improve ChatGPT's reliability in delivering religious information.

IM3 proposed, "ChatGPT could be equipped with an interactive consultation feature with scholars for in-depth religious questions." IM4 added, "This feature would provide users with direct access to religious experts." IM5 explained, "Direct interaction with scholars would offer more personalized and accurate answers." IM6 highlighted, "Interactive consultations could serve as a solution to AI's limitations in understanding religious contexts." IM1 further stated, "This feature would bridge users' needs for more detailed answers." The interactive consultation feature is expected to enrich the religious learning experience through ChatGPT. With this feature, users could directly engage with scholars who are experts in their fields, ensuring more accurate and relevant responses. Interactive consultations would also allow users to ask more specific or complex questions that AI might struggle to answer independently. Additionally, interaction with scholars would provide a more personalized and in-depth learning experience, as scholars can tailor their explanations based on users' backgrounds and needs. This feature would also help overcome AI's limitations in grasping the nuances and contexts of religious discussions, which often require human wisdom. Thus, the interactive consultation feature emerges as an innovative solution to enhance ChatGPT's educational value.

IM2 explained, "Adding a learning module based on classical Islamic texts (kitab kuning) would enrich users' knowledge of religious studies." IM3 added, "Classical texts such as *Fathul Mu'in* and *Safinatun Najah* should be included in the learning materials." IM4 emphasized, "This module would help users gain a deeper understanding of fundamental Islamic concepts." IM5 stressed, "Classical

Islamic texts have been a reliable source of knowledge for centuries." IM6 concluded, "With this module, ChatGPT could become a more comprehensive learning tool." The addition of a module based on *kitab kuning* would enhance ChatGPT's educational value. These classical texts serve as primary references in Islamic scholarship, covering various aspects such as jurisprudence (*fiqh*), theology (*tauhid*), and mysticism (*tasawuf*). By incorporating content from these texts into the learning module, ChatGPT could provide more in-depth and authentic explanations. This module would also help users systematically understand fundamental Islamic concepts, making the learning process more accessible. Furthermore, using *kitab kuning* as a source material would ensure the accuracy of the information provided, as these texts have been recognized for their authority by scholars throughout history. Thus, the inclusion of a *kitab kuning*-based module becomes a strategic step toward making ChatGPT a more comprehensive and reliable religious learning tool.

IM1 proposed, "ChatGPT needs to have an answer verification feature to ensure the accuracy of the information provided." IM2 added, "This feature can help users check the validity of answers based on reliable sources." IM3 explained, "Answer verification will guarantee that the information received aligns with Islamic principles." IM4 emphasized, "This feature will enhance user trust in AI for learning about religion." IM5 concluded by saying, "With a verification feature, ChatGPT can become a safer tool to use." The development of an answer verification feature would ensure that ChatGPT provides reliable information in accordance with Islamic teachings. This feature would allow users to validate AI-generated responses by referring to trusted primary sources, such as the Qur'an, authentic Hadiths, or authoritative Islamic books. By incorporating verification, users can ensure that the information they receive has undergone a rigorous review process, minimizing the risk of misinterpretation. Additionally, this feature would increase user confidence in ChatGPT as a learning tool for religious studies, as they would have the ability to verify the accuracy of the information themselves. Furthermore, the verification feature could help users identify potential biases or errors in AI responses, enabling them to make more informed decisions when understanding religious teachings. Therefore, the development of an answer verification feature is a crucial solution for maintaining the integrity of religious information conveyed through ChatGPT.

DISCUSSION

Research findings suggest that students' low interest in utilizing ChatGPT as a religious learning resource is due to three primary factors. First, the absence of scholarly authority with a clear chain of transmission, as the legitimacy of Islamic knowledge requires a lineage of learning from teachers or scholars with a recognized sanad. Second, ChatGPT's limitations in presenting evidence accurately and contextually necessitate additional verification. Third, concerns over potential distortions in the interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith arise, as understanding Islamic texts requires an in-depth study of the Arabic language,

historical context, and proper exegesis methodology. As a solution, respondents suggested the development of ChatGPT integration with scholars or Islamic institutions to provide more accurate responses in line with Islamic scholarly principles. They also recommended the use of authentic primary sources, such as authoritative Islamic books and authentic Hadiths, and the implementation of a warning feature reminding users to consult scholars for complex religious matters.

The low interest of students in utilizing ChatGPT as a source of religious learning can be explained through the perspectives of social authority theory and the social construction of knowledge theory. According to Weber, as cited in Wæraas (2007), social authority is a form of power recognized as legitimate by society, which in the Islamic context often stems from the tradition of sanad—a chain of knowledge transmission through credible scholars or teachers. This explains why students are reluctant to use ChatGPT, as the technology lacks formal authority within the structure of Islamic scholarship. Additionally, the social construction of knowledge theory by Berger and Luckmann (1966) emphasizes that knowledge is shaped through social interactions and established institutions. In this case, religious understanding among Muslims has been collectively constructed through in-depth studies such as Qur'anic exegesis (tafsir), hadith analysis, and direct teachings from qualified scholars. ChatGPT, with its algorithm based on big data, lacks the ability to comprehend the historical, linguistic, and methodological contexts required for interpreting Islamic texts (Ahmed, 2024). As a result, the information it generates is often perceived as inaccurate or even misleading. This concern is further reinforced by the Technology Trust Theory, which states that users' trust in technology depends on their perception of its reliability and validity (Ejdys, 2018). Therefore, the absence of a direct verification mechanism by scholars or Islamic institutions makes students less confident in ChatGPT's responses, leading them to prefer more traditional and trusted sources of learning (Ittefaq et.al., 2025)

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research that has identified the limitations of artificial intelligence (AI) in accurately and contextually presenting religious information; for instance, Fadhel (2025) found that AI systems like ChatGPT struggle to understand theological and philosophical nuances due to their inability to grasp historical context or complex interpretive methods, while Hidayat et al. (2024) emphasized the greater trust Muslim communities place in religious scholars compared to anonymous digital sources. However, this study distinguishes itself by focusing on practical solutions proposed by students to improve ChatGPT's reliability in an Islamic context, such as integrating the platform with Islamic institutions, using authentic primary sources, and including warning features that encourage users to consult religious authorities' recommendations, largely absent from prior studies. Unlike earlier research that mainly highlighted issues without offering actionable solutions, this study introduces a participatory approach where students actively identify challenges and suggest innovative strategies, contributing new and applicable insights that can guide the development of AI technologies to better align with Islamic scholarly principles (Hakim et al., 2023).

This study reveals that students not only identify the limitations of ChatGPT such as its lack of scholarly authority, its inability to present accurate religious evidence, and the risk of misinterpreting Islamic texts but also provide practical recommendations to address these issues. One of the key findings is the need to develop a feature that allows ChatGPT to collaborate directly with Islamic scholars or reputable religious institutions, ensuring that its responses are validated by competent religious authorities (Arafat et al., 2024). Additionally, students suggest that ChatGPT should be equipped with a database of authentic primary sources, such as authoritative Islamic texts and authentic hadith collections, along with a warning feature that reminds users to consult scholars for complex religious matters (Aprilia, 2024). These findings suggest that the application of ChatGPT in Islamic studies should be grounded in a collaborative approach that integrates technology and Islamic scholarly traditions, where AI serves as a supporting tool rather than a replacement for religious authorities (Putra, 2024). For now, to enhance ChatGPT's accuracy, developers need to collaborate with religious experts to design algorithms that prioritize authentic sources and proper interpretive methodologies, while clarifying that the information provided serves only as an initial reference and requires verification from scholars (Dewi, 2024; Bannister, Peñalver, & Urbieta, 2024). Through this approach, ChatGPT can become a more valuable tool without compromising the integrity of Islamic scholarship.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that students' low interest in using ChatGPT as a source for religious learning is driven by three main factors: the absence of scholarly authority with a recognized chain of transmission (sanad), limitations in accurately and contextually presenting religious evidence, and concerns over potential distortions in interpreting Islamic texts. In Islamic tradition, scholarly authority is crucial, as religious knowledge must be acquired through a clear transmission chain from teachers or scholars with an authentic sanad. ChatGPT, as an AI-based technology, lacks the capacity to fulfill this principle, making it less trustworthy for students. Additionally, while ChatGPT can provide information about Islam, its responses often require further verification, as they tend to be inaccurate in referencing Quranic verses and hadiths precisely. Moreover, understanding Islamic texts requires mastery of Arabic, historical context, and advanced interpretative methodologies—elements that current AI systems struggle to replicate. The main limitation of this study is the lack of exploration of alternative technologies that may be more suitable for religious learning, as well as the absence of real-world trials for the proposed solutions, such as integrating ChatGPT with Islamic scholars or religious institutions.

To enhance the relevance of ChatGPT in religious education, this study proposes several solutions, such as developing integration features with Islamic scholars or institutions, utilizing authentic primary sources, and implementing warning features that direct users to consult experts on complex religious matters. These measures aim to strengthen scholarly legitimacy while reducing the risk of

misinterpretation. However, this study has certain limitations. It lacks an in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of these solutions in real-world settings and focuses exclusively on students' perspectives, without incorporating insights from scholars or technology experts that could contribute to a more comprehensive understanding. Future research should encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration among religious scholars, technology experts, and educators to develop a more inclusive and accurate AI-based religious learning platform. Furthermore, assessing the social, ethical, and sustainability implications of this technology should be a priority, ensuring its wide acceptance while preserving core Islamic scholarly values. In this way, technology can function as an effective educational tool without undermining the established authority of religious scholarship..

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