

Six Academic Attitudes of Muslim Scholars Toward Knowledge Sources in the Digital Era

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Abstract

In the early period of Islam, knowledge sources were centralized in the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Over time, these sources expanded into diverse forms, and in the contemporary digital era, knowledge acquisition is heavily influenced by technology-based information. The challenge lies in the fact that digital sources cannot be fully trusted in the same way as the Quran and Sunnah. This article aims to analyze the appropriate attitudes of Muslim academics in filtering and utilizing knowledge sources in the digital age. A qualitative content analysis approach was employed, drawing on Quranic verses, Hadith, theoretical frameworks, expert opinions, and peer-reviewed articles indexed globally. Data were thematically analyzed using Nvivo 12 with Miles and Huberman's interactive technique. The findings reveal six essential attitudes for Muslim academics: i) critical and selective thinking, ii) adherence to Islamic ethics, iii) effective use of technology as a medium of knowledge, iv) preservation of academic integrity, v) wise management of time and information consumption, and vi) orientation toward the advancement of the ummah. These attitudes serve as a reference framework and ethical guideline for Muslim academics to intelligently filter digital information. The study contributes to the discourse on Islamic academic ethics in the digital era and provides a foundation for future research in broader contexts.

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INTRODUCTION

The digital revolution has profoundly altered the epistemological landscape of Islamic education. Where once the Quran and Sunnah were the sole authoritative sources, today knowledge is mediated through countless digital platforms. This shift has created opportunities for democratization of knowledge but also challenges in maintaining authenticity and reliability. One pressing issue is the credibility of digital information (Ahmed, 2016; Jacoby, 2025; Saunders, 2019; Walker, 2014). Unlike the Quran and Hadith, which are authenticated through rigorous transmission chains, digital sources often lack verification. The rise of misinformation and unverified claims threatens the integrity of Islamic scholarship. Moreover, the digital era has blurred the boundaries between formal and informal Blogs, YouTube channels, and social media accounts have become popular avenues for disseminating Islamic knowledge, yet they often lack scholarly rigor this

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democratization raises questions about authority and responsibility. Finally, the tension between timeless Islamic sources and dynamic digital information underscores the need for Muslim academics to adopt critical, ethical, and integrative attitudes. Without such frameworks, Islamic scholarship risks being diluted by unreliable digital narratives (Ramadan, 2025; Rockenbach et al., 2017; Sarsour et al., 2022).

In recent years, scholars have increasingly examined the intersection of Islamic education and digital literacy. Al-Azami emphasizes that while digital platforms democratize access to Islamic knowledge, they also risk diluting scholarly authority. This tension highlights the need for Muslim academics to adopt critical and ethical attitudes when engaging with online sources.

Another strand of literature focuses on the epistemological implications of digital knowledge. According, the digital era challenges traditional hierarchies of knowledge transmission, where scholars once held exclusive authority (Abdollahi & Noltemeyer, 2018; Ng, 2022). The rise of self-taught individuals through digital platforms necessitates a rethinking of how Muslim academics validate and filter information. Scholars have also explored the role of technology in enhancing Islamic pedagogy. For instance, argue that digital tools can support collaborative learning and broaden access to classical texts. However, they caution that without ethical guidelines, such tools may inadvertently promote superficial engagement rather than deep scholarly reflection.

The literature further points to the importance of academic integrity in digital contexts. Studies highlight that plagiarism, misrepresentation, and unethical citation practices are more prevalent in digital scholarship. This underscores the necessity for Muslim academics to uphold integrity as a core attitude when navigating digital sources. Recent works emphasize the communal dimension of digital knowledge. notes that Muslim academics have a responsibility not only to safeguard their own scholarly practices but also to guide communities toward ethical engagement with digital information. This communal orientation aligns with the Islamic principle of advancing the ummah through responsible scholarship (Chen et al., 2025; Gunton, 2022; Lehane et al., 2024; Weber et al., 2025).

In addition argue for the integration of *adab* (ethical conduct) with knowledge acquisition, stressing that Islamic education must maintain harmony between intellectual pursuit and moral responsibility in the digital age. Their findings suggest that ethical literacy is as important as technical literacy in digital contexts (Abuadas & Albikawi, 2025; Asamoah et al., 2024; Luck et al., 2022). demonstrate that platforms such as Facebook can be used for Islamic education, but only when users demonstrate ethical practices such as content verification and respectful communication. This highlights the dual role of technology as both a facilitator and a potential disruptor of Islamic pedagogy.

identifies research gaps in digital competence within Islamic education, noting that while many studies address technical skills, few provide structured frameworks for ethical engagement. This gap underscores the need for comprehensive models that integrate critical thinking, ethics, and communal responsibility. Finally, Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive model of qualitative analysis has been widely applied in educational research, including studies of digital literacy. Its emphasis on thematic coding and iterative analysis provides a robust methodological foundation for examining the complex attitudes required of Muslim academics in the digital era (Ardyawin et al., 2025; Iqbal et al., 2014).

The urgency of discussing this topic stems from the increasing reliance of Muslim academics and students on digital sources. As digital platforms become the primary medium for knowledge dissemination, the risk of adopting unverified or unethical information grows exponentially. Scholars such as have warned that the democratization of Islamic knowledge through digital media, while beneficial in terms of accessibility, has simultaneously opened the door to misinformation and superficial interpretations. Moreover, the digital divide in Islamic education highlights disparities in access, competence, and ethical engagement (Namaziandost, 2025). argue that while some institutions have embraced digital literacy, others lag behind, creating uneven standards of academic practice. Without clear guidelines, Muslim academics may inadvertently contribute to the spread of misinformation or compromise their scholarly integrity.

The urgency is also tied to the broader societal impact. Muslim academics play a crucial role in shaping the intellectual and moral development of their communities. emphasize that Islamic education must integrate adab (ethical conduct) with digital literacy to prevent erosion of values. If academics fail to critically and ethically engage with digital knowledge, the consequences may include weakened academic standards, loss of credibility, and erosion of Islamic values.

Therefore, articulating six academic attitudes is not merely an academic exercise but a pressing necessity for safeguarding the integrity of Islamic scholarship and ensuring that Muslim academics contribute positively to the advancement of the ummah in the digital era. Murzaki highlights that communal responsibility is central to Islamic scholarship, and without proactive measures, the digital era could undermine the collective mission of advancing the ummah (Engkizar et al., 2023; Fulco & Abdelgawad, 2025).

Another dimension of urgency lies in the global academic competition. As universities worldwide adopt digital platforms for teaching and research, Muslim academics must ensure that their engagement with these platforms reflects both scholarly excellence and Islamic ethical values. Without proactive adaptation, Muslim scholars risk being marginalized in global academic discourse, which increasingly values digital literacy and innovation. Furthermore, the urgency is heightened by the generational shift in learning habits. Younger students, often referred to as "*digital natives*," rely heavily on online sources for their academic and religious learning. If Muslim academics do not provide structured guidance rooted in Islamic ethics, these students may develop fragmented understandings of knowledge, detached from authentic sources. This generational challenge underscores the need for immediate scholarly intervention.

While existing literature has addressed digital literacy, ethics, and academic integrity in Islamic education, few studies have systematically articulated a comprehensive framework of attitudes specifically tailored for Muslim academics. Most research focuses on isolated aspects such as digital competence or ethical communication, leaving a gap in holistic guidance. identifies research gaps in digital competence within Islamic education but does not provide a structured set of attitudes for academics to adopt, highlighting the need for integrative frameworks (Achour et al., 2014; Auliyah et al., 2025; Lopes Cardozo et al., 2022). emphasize honesty and accountability in academic integrity but often neglect practical strategies for filtering and utilizing digital information effectively.

Furthermore, while scholars such as discuss the pedagogical potential of digital tools, they often stop short of addressing the ethical and communal

dimensions of their use. This leaves unanswered questions about how Muslim academics can balance technological innovation with the preservation of Islamic values. This article addresses the gap by synthesizing insights from Quranic and Hadith sources, scholarly theories, and empirical studies to propose six integrated attitudes that encompass critical thinking, ethics, technology use, integrity, time management, and communal advancement. Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive model provides the methodological foundation for this synthesis, ensuring that the framework is both systematic and adaptable.

This article explores how Muslim academics can responsibly navigate digital knowledge sources while remaining faithful to Islamic epistemology. It examines how critical and selective engagement can be balanced with adherence to Islamic ethics, and how technology can be harnessed as a tool for knowledge without compromising academic integrity. The discussion also considers how academics can manage time and information consumption wisely, ensuring that digital engagement does not lead to intellectual fatigue or ethical compromise. Ultimately, the study seeks to understand how these attitudes contribute to advancing the ummah, positioning Muslim academics as both guardians of tradition and innovators in the digital age (Possamai et al., 2019; Shapoo, 2025; Yaren & Karademir, 2025).

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design with a content analysis approach. Qualitative methods are particularly suitable for exploring complex social and educational phenomena because they allow researchers to capture meanings, values, and attitudes in depth in the context of Islamic education, qualitative content analysis provides a systematic way to interpret textual data from religious sources, scholarly works, and expert opinions, ensuring that the findings are grounded in both tradition and contemporary scholarship. The choice of content analysis was guided by the need to identify recurring themes and patterns in the discourse on Islamic academic attitudes in the digital era. content analysis is effective for examining communication in various forms, including texts, documents, and digital media. By applying this method, the study was able to synthesize insights from Quranic verses, Hadith, and academic literature, producing a thematic framework that reflects both epistemological and ethical dimensions (Engkizar, et al., 2025; Hajar, 2025; R'boul et al., 2024; Salamah-Qudsi, 2025). The primary data sources for this study included Quranic verses and Hadith, which serve as the foundational references for Islamic epistemology.

These sources were complemented by secondary data drawn from peer-reviewed journal articles indexed in Scopus and Web of Science, scholarly books, and conference proceedings related to Islamic education and digital literacy. This combination ensured that the analysis was both authentic and academically rigorous in addition, expert opinions and theoretical frameworks from contemporary scholars were incorporated to provide contextual relevance. Data were analyzed using Nvivo 12 software, which facilitated the organization, coding, and thematic categorization of textual data. The analysis followed the Miles and Huberman (1994) interactive model, consisting of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. This iterative process allowed for systematic identification of themes related to academic attitudes, ensuring that findings were both reliable and meaningful. To enhance trustworthiness, triangulation was applied by cross-checking Quranic and Hadith references with scholarly interpretations and

peer-reviewed articles. Member checking and peer debriefing were also employed to validate interpretations, consistent criteria for qualitative rigor (Engkizar, et al., 2025; Istiqamah et al., 2024; Mustafa et al., 2025; Okenova et al., 2025; Ummah et al., 2025). These techniques ensured that the thematic framework developed in this study was credible, dependable, and transferable to broader contexts of Islamic education in the digital era.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Before presenting the results, it is important to emphasize that the methodological choices outlined earlier provided a strong foundation for uncovering meaningful insights. By employing qualitative content analysis and thematic coding through Nvivo 12, the study was able to systematically organize diverse data sources, ranging from Quranic verses and Hadith to peer-reviewed articles and expert opinions. This rigorous process ensured that the findings were not only descriptive but also interpretive, reflecting both the epistemological depth of Islamic scholarship and the contemporary challenges posed by digital information.

The thematic analysis revealed recurring patterns that converged into six distinct academic attitudes. These attitudes represent a synthesis of classical Islamic principles with modern academic practices, offering a holistic framework for Muslim scholars in the digital era. Each theme emerged through careful triangulation of religious texts, scholarly theories, and empirical studies, ensuring credibility and relevance. The following section narrates these six findings comprehensively, demonstrating how they can serve as guiding principles for Muslim academics navigating the complexities of digital knowledge.

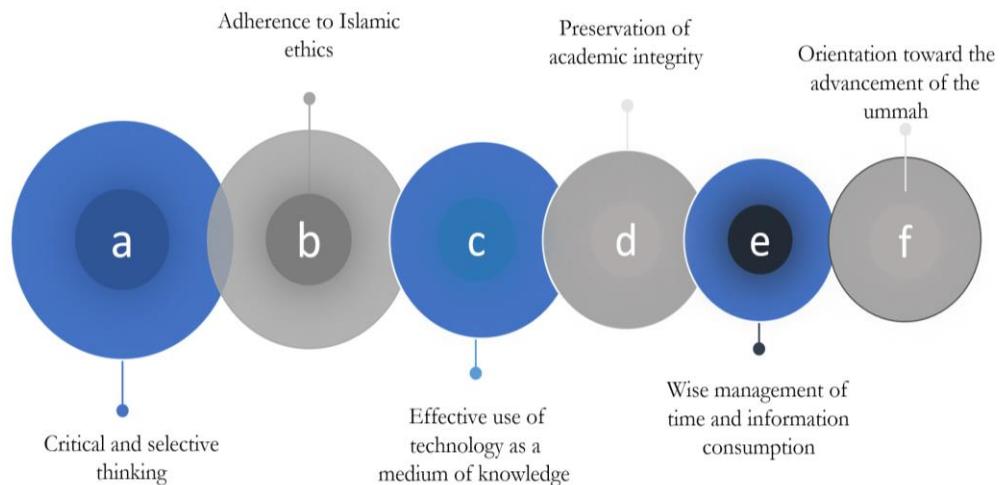


Fig 1. Six Academic Attitudes of Muslim Scholars Toward Knowledge Sources in the Digital Era

Critical and selective thinking

The first finding emphasizes the necessity of critical and selective thinking when engaging with digital knowledge sources. Muslim academics must carefully evaluate the credibility of information, distinguishing between authentic and unreliable materials. This attitude aligns with the Quran injunction to verify information before accepting it (Al-Hujurat: 6).

يَأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوهُ قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ فَتُصْبِحُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَدِيمِينَ

Meaning: “O you who have believed, if there comes to you a disobedient one with information, investigate, lest you harm people out of ignorance”

Such guidance underscores the importance of intellectual vigilance in the digital era. Critical thinking also involves applying methodological rigor to digital content (Engkizar et al., 2024; Htay et al., 2025; Muslim, 2021; Pu & Xu, 2024; Schöpfer & Hernandez, 2024). notes, content analysis requires systematic evaluation of communication to ensure validity. Muslim academics must therefore adopt analytical frameworks that allow them to filter information based on authenticity, relevance, and scholarly value. This prevents the uncritical acceptance of digital narratives that may distort Islamic epistemology. Moreover, selective engagement ensures that academics prioritize sources that contribute meaningfully to scholarship. warns that the democratization of Islamic knowledge through digital platforms can dilute scholarly authority. By being selective, Muslim academics safeguard the integrity of their research and maintain alignment with authentic Islamic traditions.

Adherence to Islamic ethics

The second finding highlights adherence to Islamic ethics as a guiding principle in digital scholarship. Ethical conduct (*adab*) is central to Islamic education, ensuring that intellectual pursuits remain harmonized with moral responsibility. argue that ethical literacy is as important as technical literacy, particularly in contexts where digital platforms dominate knowledge dissemination. Adherence to ethics also involves honesty, respect, and accountability in academic practices. emphasize that plagiarism and misrepresentation are increasingly prevalent in digital scholarship, making ethical vigilance essential. Muslim academics must therefore uphold integrity by citing sources accurately, respecting intellectual property, and avoiding deceptive practices. Furthermore, Islamic ethics extend beyond individual responsibility to communal obligations. stresses that Muslim academics have a duty to guide their communities toward ethical engagement with digital knowledge. This communal dimension ensures that scholarship not only benefits individuals but also strengthens the moral fabric of society.

Effective use of technology as a medium of knowledge

The third finding underscores the importance of using technology effectively as a medium of knowledge. Digital tools offer unprecedented opportunities for collaboration, access, and dissemination of Islamic scholarship. highlight that technology can broaden access to classical texts and facilitate interactive learning when guided by ethical frameworks. However, effective use requires balancing innovation with depth (Shmugliakov, 2024). caution that platforms like Facebook can support Islamic education but may also encourage superficial engagement if not used responsibly. Muslim academics must therefore design strategies that promote meaningful learning experiences rather than passive consumption of information.

Additionally, technology should be harnessed to bridge traditional and modern epistemologies. By integrating Quran and Hadith sources with digital tools, Muslim academics can create hybrid models of scholarship that remain authentic while embracing innovation. This approach ensures that Islamic education remains relevant in the digital age without compromising its foundational principles.

Preservation of academic integrity

The fourth finding emphasizes the preservation of academic integrity as a cornerstone of Islamic scholarship. Integrity involves honesty, transparency, and accountability in all academic practices. Note that digital contexts have increased risks of plagiarism and misrepresentation, making integrity more critical than ever. Preserving integrity also requires vigilance in citation and referencing. Argues that document analysis must be conducted with respect for intellectual property to maintain credibility. Muslim academics must therefore ensure that their engagement with digital sources reflects rigorous academic standards. Moreover, integrity safeguards the credibility of Islamic scholarship in global academic discourse. By upholding ethical and transparent practices, Muslim academics contribute to the advancement of knowledge while maintaining alignment with Islamic values. This dual commitment strengthens both the scholarly and moral dimensions of their work.

Wise management of time and information consumption

The fifth finding highlights the importance of wise management of time and information consumption. In the digital era, academics are inundated with vast amounts of information, making moderation essential. The Islamic principle of *wasatiyyah* (moderation) provides a framework for balancing engagement with digital sources. Wise management involves prioritizing quality over quantity. Emphasizes that qualitative research requires depth rather than breadth, a principle that applies equally to digital scholarship. Muslim academics must therefore allocate time to critically analyze selected sources rather than consuming information indiscriminately. Furthermore, managing information consumption prevents intellectual fatigue and distraction. Creswell and argue that effective research design requires focus and discipline. By applying these principles, Muslim academics can maintain productivity and ensure that their engagement with digital knowledge remains purposeful and ethical.

Orientation toward the advancement of the ummah

The sixth finding stresses that scholarship must ultimately serve the advancement of the ummah. Islamic education is not merely an individual pursuit but a communal responsibility. Highlights that Muslim academics must guide their communities toward ethical and responsible engagement with digital knowledge. Orientation toward communal advancement involves aligning scholarship with societal needs. Argue that integrating *adab* with digital literacy ensures that education contributes to both intellectual and moral development. This holistic approach strengthens the role of academics as leaders in their communities. Finally, the advancement of the ummah requires innovation that remains faithful to Islamic values. By synthesizing traditional epistemology with modern digital practices, Muslim academics can create frameworks that address contemporary challenges while preserving authenticity. This orientation ensures that Islamic scholarship remains relevant, impactful, and transformative in the digital era.

The six findings presented earlier provide a thematic framework that reflects both the epistemological depth of Islamic scholarship and the contemporary challenges posed by digital knowledge. However, to fully appreciate their significance, these findings must be situated within broader theoretical perspectives, expert opinions, and prior research. The discussion that follows synthesizes classical Islamic principles with modern academic discourse, demonstrating how each attitude not only addresses immediate challenges in the digital era but also

contributes to the long-term advancement of Islamic education and scholarship. By engaging critically with existing theories and empirical studies, the discussion highlights the relevance, applicability, and transformative potential of these six attitudes for Muslim academics worldwide.

The first finding highlights the importance of critical and selective thinking in engaging with digital knowledge sources. The Quran explicitly commands believers to verify information before acting upon it which provides a theological foundation for critical inquiry. This principle resonates with modern educational theories that emphasize critical literacy as a means of empowering learners to evaluate sources and resist misinformation. Scholars such as argue that the digital era challenges traditional hierarchies of knowledge transmission, necessitating new frameworks for validation. Their work demonstrates that Muslim academics must adopt evaluative strategies to distinguish between authentic scholarship and unreliable digital narratives. This aligns with assertion that content analysis requires systematic scrutiny of communication to ensure validity.

Empirical studies also support the need for selective engagement. warns that the democratization of Islamic knowledge through digital platforms can dilute scholarly authority, leading to fragmented understandings of religious texts. By applying selective thinking, academics can safeguard the epistemological integrity of Islamic education. Thus, critical and selective thinking is not only a religious obligation but also a scholarly necessity. It bridges classical Islamic epistemology with contemporary theories of critical literacy, ensuring that Muslim academics remain vigilant in filtering digital information while maintaining fidelity to authentic sources.

The second finding emphasizes adherence to Islamic ethics as a guiding principle in digital scholarship. Ethics in Islam are rooted in *adab*, which encompasses honesty, respect, and responsibility in intellectual pursuits. argue that ethical literacy is as important as technical literacy, particularly in contexts dominated by digital platforms. highlight that plagiarism and misrepresentation are increasingly prevalent in digital scholarship, making ethical vigilance essential. Their findings suggest that Muslim academics must uphold integrity by citing sources accurately and respecting intellectual property. This aligns with Lincoln criteria for trustworthiness in qualitative research, which emphasize credibility and dependability.

The communal dimension of ethics is also significant. stresses that Muslim academics have a duty to guide their communities toward ethical engagement with digital knowledge. This perspective reflects theory of collective responsibility, which underscores the role of scholars in maintaining social cohesion through ethical practices. Therefore, adherence to Islamic ethics ensures that scholarship remains both morally grounded and academically credible. It synthesizes religious principles with contemporary academic standards, reinforcing the dual responsibility of Muslim academics to themselves and their communities.

The third finding underscores the importance of using technology effectively as a medium of knowledge. Digital tools offer unprecedented opportunities for collaboration and access to classical texts. highlight that technology can broaden access to Islamic scholarship when guided by ethical frameworks. However, effective use requires balancing innovation with depth. caution that platforms like Facebook can support Islamic education but may encourage superficial engagement

if not used responsibly. This reflects critique of technology, which warns that tools can shape culture in unintended ways if not critically managed.

Empirical evidence shows that technology can enhance pedagogy when integrated thoughtfully. Studies on blended learning in Islamic education demonstrate improved student engagement and comprehension when digital tools are used alongside traditional methods. This supports Vygotsky's (1978) theory of mediated learning, which emphasizes the role of tools in cognitive development. Thus, effective use of technology requires intentional design and ethical oversight. Muslim academics must harness digital tools to enrich scholarship while avoiding superficiality, ensuring that technology serves as a bridge between tradition and modernity.

The fourth finding emphasizes the preservation of academic integrity as a cornerstone of Islamic scholarship. Integrity involves honesty, transparency, and accountability in academic practices. Note that digital contexts have increased risks of plagiarism, making integrity more critical than ever. This argues that document analysis must be conducted with respect for intellectual property to maintain credibility. This principle is particularly relevant in digital scholarship, where the ease of copying and sharing information can tempt academics to compromise integrity. Muslim scholars must therefore adopt rigorous citation practices to uphold credibility.

Theological perspectives also reinforce integrity. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized honesty as a fundamental virtue, which extends to academic practices. This aligns with modern academic standards that prioritize transparency and accountability in research. Preserving integrity safeguards the credibility of Islamic scholarship in global academic discourse. By upholding ethical and transparent practices, Muslim academics contribute to the advancement of knowledge while maintaining alignment with Islamic values, thereby strengthening both scholarly and moral dimensions of their work.

The fifth finding highlights the importance of wise management of time and information consumption. In the digital era, academics are inundated with vast amounts of information, making moderation essential. The Islamic principle of *wasatiyyah* (moderation) provides a framework for balancing engagement with digital sources. This emphasizes that qualitative research requires depth rather than breadth, a principle that applies equally to digital scholarship. Muslim academics must therefore allocate time to critically analyze selected sources rather than consuming information indiscriminately. This ensures productivity and focus.

Empirical studies show that excessive digital engagement can lead to intellectual fatigue and distraction. This argues that effective research design requires discipline and prioritization. By managing time wisely, Muslim academics can maintain productivity and ensure purposeful engagement with digital knowledge. Thus, wise management of time and information consumption synthesizes Islamic principles of moderation with contemporary theories of focus and discipline. It enables academics to remain productive while safeguarding their intellectual and ethical integrity.

The sixth finding stresses that scholarship must ultimately serve the advancement of the ummah. Islamic education is not merely an individual pursuit but a communal responsibility. This highlights that Muslim academics must guide their communities toward ethical and responsible engagement with digital knowledge. This orientation aligns with a sense of collective responsibility, which emphasizes the role

of scholars in maintaining social cohesion. By aligning scholarship with societal needs, Muslim academics contribute to both intellectual and moral development. They argue that integrating *adab* with digital literacy ensures that education strengthens the moral fabric of society. Empirical evidence supports this communal orientation. Studies on community-based Islamic education show that when academics prioritize societal advancement, educational outcomes improve significantly. This reflects emphasis on the social dimension of learning.

CONCLUSION

This study responds to the urgent need for Muslim academics to critically and ethically navigate digital knowledge sources by articulating six integrated attitudes: critical and selective thinking, adherence to Islamic ethics, effective use of technology, preservation of academic integrity, wise management of time and information consumption, and orientation toward the advancement of the ummah. The implications of these findings are significant: they provide practical guidance for academics to safeguard scholarly credibility, foster ethical digital engagement, and strengthen communal responsibility in Islamic education. The novelty of this article lies in its holistic synthesis of Quranic and Hadith principles with contemporary theories and empirical research, offering a comprehensive framework that bridges classical epistemology with modern digital challenges. By situating these attitudes within both religious and academic discourse, the study contributes a unique and transformative perspective to the field of Islamic education in the digital era.

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Author contribution

Fardu Hasan: data curation, writing-original draft preparation, **Tomikal:** conceptualization, methodology, **Mustamin Gilling:** visualization, editing, analysis.

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