



The Ethics of Automated Academe: A Critical Inquiry into AI, Islamic Educational Management, and Ethical Reconstruction in Higher Education

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61987/jemr.v3i1.29>

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Artificial Intelligence,
Academic Integrity,
Islamic Values, AI
Literacy

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The growing use of artificial intelligence (AI) in higher education offers opportunities to improve learning and academic productivity while raising concerns about academic integrity, information accuracy, and students' intellectual independence. This study aims to examine students' and lecturers' experiences of AI use in academic activities, identify its ethical challenges, and explore how Islamic values can inform responsible AI governance. A qualitative approach with a critical inquiry orientation was employed. Data were collected through online written semi-structured interviews with eight students and one lecturer selected through purposive sampling. The data were analyzed thematically through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings reveal that AI supports material comprehension, idea development, academic writing, and language improvement. However, its use raises concerns about inaccurate information, fabricated references, technological dependence, and academic integrity. Participants emphasized information verification, independent thinking, and the Islamic values of *amanah* (trustworthiness), honesty, and responsibility. The findings imply that Islamic higher education institutions should establish clear AI-use guidelines, strengthen AI literacy and digital ethics education, encourage transparency in academic authorship, and implement assessments that consider students' learning processes. Integrating Islamic values into institutional governance can help ensure that AI supports educational objectives and academic integrity.

Article History:

Received: July 2026; Revised: August 2026; Accepted: September 2026

Please cite this article in APA style as:

Qodriah, L., Hefniy. (2026). The Ethics of Automated Academe: A Critical Inquiry into AI, Islamic Educational Management, and Ethical Reconstruction in Higher Education. *Journal of Social Studies and Education*, 3(1), 195-209.

INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence (AI) is changing how knowledge is accessed, interpreted, and produced in higher education. Students use AI tools to clarify difficult concepts, develop ideas, organize writing, and improve academic

language, while lecturers consider their potential for learning support and assessment (Affan et al., 2026; Zazin et al., 2025). These developments matter beyond universities because higher education contributes to professional competence, public trust, and the preparation of responsible graduates. AI may widen access to learning assistance and make academic tasks more efficient; however, these benefits depend on users' ability to evaluate outputs critically. Unverified information, fabricated references, and unclear attribution can weaken academic credibility (Christina & Indra, 2025; Aflahah et al., 2026). Therefore, AI adoption is not simply a technical decision. It is also an educational and societal concern requiring ethical awareness, critical judgment, and accountability from students, lecturers, and institutions in contemporary academic learning environments.

The issue is important because universities must balance technological innovation with independent thinking, knowledge development, and academic integrity (Akhmadi, 2024; Rhisky & Baharun, 2026). AI-generated responses may appear authoritative even when their information is inaccurate, incomplete, or unsupported. If students rely on such responses without checking evidence, technology may replace rather than strengthen learning. Unclear expectations about disclosure and authorship can produce inconsistent judgments about acceptable assistance (Ansori et al., 2023; Novita et al., 2026). These challenges affect not only grades but also confidence in academic qualifications and the knowledge institutions contribute to society. Ethical AI use requires more than prohibition or unrestricted adoption; it calls for clear guidance, verification practices, and shared responsibility. In Islamic higher education, these concerns intersect with moral formation, making it necessary to consider how ethical principles can inform individual conduct and institutional responses to change across disciplines today in institutional settings.

A central problem is the gap between general ethical principles and their practical application in academic settings (Azizah & Wardefi, 2026; Rifai et al., 2025). Students need to distinguish legitimate learning support from uses that compromise their intellectual contribution, while lecturers must communicate expectations about AI assistance, authorship, and verification of generated information. Institutions need guidance that supports consistent practice without disregarding AI's educational benefits. In Islamic higher education, values such as *amanah* (trustworthiness), honesty, responsibility, and critical reflection provide a relevant ethical orientation, but their practical meaning must be considered in everyday academic decisions. The issue is not simply whether AI is compatible with Islamic values. It is also how these values can inform responsible academic practices and institutional governance while preserving higher education's learning objectives in practice and the institutional decisions that shape everyday educational practice.

This study examines these questions at *Nurul Jadid University* through written online interviews with eight students and one lecturer. This setting provides an opportunity to explore how members of an Islamic higher education community describe AI use and understand its benefits, risks, and ethical implications (Hakim et al., 2026; Hikmah et al., 2026). The study does not assume that participants use AI in the same way or share identical views. Instead, their accounts provide contextual evidence for identifying experiences and perspectives relevant to academic responsibility, information verification, and institutional expectations. Data are analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns across the interviews. Given the small, context-specific group of informants, the study offers an interpretive account rather than statistically generalizable conclusions about all students or lecturers in Islamic higher education within the university's academic community.

Research on AI ethics and academic integrity establishes important foundations for this inquiry. Slimi and Carballido (2023) examine ethical challenges in higher education through seven global AI ethics policies, offering a policy-oriented perspective on principles guiding AI adoption. Velez and Rister (2025) address AI-assisted authorship alongside institutional and disciplinary anxieties in technical and professional communication, drawing attention to the complexity of defining acceptable authorship practices. Together, these studies show that AI raises questions about governance and responsibility for academic work (Slimi & Carballido, 2023; Velez & Rister, 2025). However, they do not, by themselves, explain how students and lecturers in a particular Islamic university interpret AI-related responsibilities through Islamic educational values (Putri et al., 2026; Haris et al., 2026). This study builds on the ethical and academic-integrity discussion by examining those experiences in context, without assuming that broader scholarship is irrelevant to religious or cultural settings.

Studies of Islamic education and value-based organizations offer useful perspectives for understanding how ethical principles can inform educational practices and organizational responsibility. Integrating Islamic values into education highlights the importance of aligning learning processes with moral principles, while value-based accountability emphasizes trust, honesty, and responsibility in institutional practices. In the context of artificial intelligence, these perspectives encourage a broader understanding of responsible technology use that extends beyond technical efficiency to include academic integrity, information verification, and ethical decision-making. The present study contributes an empirical perspective by examining students' and a lecturer's experiences of AI use in academic activities. It highlights how Islamic values can inform responsible AI practices and institutional guidance, particularly in addressing concerns about authorship, information accuracy, and independent

thinking. This perspective emphasizes the importance of translating ethical principles into practical educational approaches that support learning while maintaining academic responsibility.

The novelty of this study lies in connecting participants' AI experiences with reflection on the Islamization of Islamic educational management. Rather than treating AI ethics, academic integrity, and Islamic values separately, it examines their intersection in academic responsibility, information verification, and institutional guidance. The study does not claim to introduce a new ethical principle or establish a universal governance model. Its contribution is integrative: accounts from students and a lecturer at *Nurul Jadid University* inform reflection on how trustworthiness, honesty, responsibility, and critical judgment may shape AI management in an Islamic university. The study asks how participants experience AI, what benefits and challenges emerge, and how Islamic values may inform responsible use. Its central argument is that responsible AI use requires alignment between individual accountability and clear institutional guidance mechanisms.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative case study design with a critical inquiry orientation to examine artificial intelligence (AI) use in academic practices within Islamic higher education. A case study was appropriate because the research focused on a specific institutional setting and sought to understand participants' experiences, ethical perspectives, and interpretations in context. The critical inquiry orientation encouraged reflection on the relationships between technological practices, academic integrity, Islamic values, and institutional responsibility. This approach was relevant because AI adoption involves not only educational opportunities but also questions concerning authorship, accountability, and governance (Slimi & Carballido, 2023; Velez & Rister, 2025). The study did not aim to test causal relationships or establish statistical generalizations. Instead, it explored how participants understood AI use and how their accounts could inform critical reflection on Islamic educational management in the contemporary technological environment.

The study was conducted at Universitas Nurul Jadid, Indonesia, an institutional setting relevant to examining AI use within Islamic higher education. The location was selected because it provided a context for exploring how academic technology practices intersect with Islamic educational values and institutional responsibilities. Participants comprised nine informants: eight students and one lecturer, selected through purposive sampling based on their relevance to the research focus. Students provided accounts of AI use in academic activities, including perceived benefits, challenges, information verification, and ethical considerations. The lecturer contributed a complementary perspective on

students' AI use, academic integrity, and institutional guidance. To protect confidentiality, students were identified as S1–S8, while the lecturer was identified as L1. This participant composition supported contextual interpretation of the case without claiming statistical representativeness of other Islamic universities or higher education populations.

Data were collected through online written interviews conducted over one week. Participants submitted written responses at varying intervals, ranging from less than one day to three days. A semi-structured interview guide was used, with questions adapted to participants' roles. Student questions addressed AI use in academic activities, perceived benefits and limitations, ethical understanding, information verification, Islamic values, and expectations regarding institutional policies. The lecturer's questions focused on students' AI use, educational benefits, ethical risks, trustworthiness, honesty, responsibility, existing academic rules, and AI management in Islamic higher education. Permission to conduct the interviews was obtained from participants before data collection. The dataset consisted of the written responses provided by the nine informants. These responses served as the primary empirical material for identifying participants' experiences and perspectives. The study did not claim additional observational or documentary evidence beyond the collected interview data.

Data were analyzed thematically through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. First, all responses were read repeatedly to develop familiarity with the dataset. Relevant statements were then coded according to the research focus, including academic productivity, integrity, information accuracy, verification, Islamic values, and institutional governance. Second, related codes were grouped into categories and organized in a thematic display to facilitate comparison across participants. Third, provisional themes were reviewed against the original responses to verify their consistency with the available evidence. The analysis identified five themes: AI as support for learning and academic productivity; academic integrity and the boundaries of AI use; information verification as academic responsibility; Islamic values as an ethical foundation for AI use; and the need for value-based AI governance in Islamic higher education. Differences, brief responses, and unanswered questions were retained without inferring unsupported meanings. The final interpretation connected these themes to the study's research objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Thematic analysis of written interviews with eight students (S1–S8) and one lecturer (L1) at Nurul Jadid University identified five main themes: AI as a tool for supporting learning and academic productivity; academic integrity and the boundaries of AI use; information verification as a form of academic

responsibility; Islamic values as an ethical foundation for AI use; and the need for value-based AI governance in Islamic higher education. These themes represent participants' experiences of using AI, their perceptions of its risks, and their views on individual and institutional responsibilities in academic activities.

AI as a Tool for Supporting Learning and Academic Productivity

The interview findings showed that students used AI to support various academic activities, including writing articles, developing ideas, improving written work, understanding course materials, and reviewing assignments. S1 explained that AI was used "to write papers, articles, and assignments that I do not understand." S1 also described its benefits for academic writing, stating that AI "makes it easier for me to create more academic and coherent sentences when writing papers and articles."

AI also helped students organize their writing and save time. S2 described using AI as "a tool to help organize the structure of an article and translate it into English." S2 also identified one of its benefits as "shortening the time needed to write an article." S3 used AI "to help when I have difficulty putting words together, understanding the material, and other tasks," whereas S4 used it "to check whether my assignment is correct."

Similar experiences were reported by S5, who used AI to write papers, find ideas, understand course materials, and organize written work. S6 used AI to "help generate ideas, develop writing outlines, find initial references, and refine the language of a draft." S7 stated, "AI is very helpful in overcoming my learning difficulties," while S8 used it to "find course materials and help complete assignments." From the lecturer's perspective, L1 supported the use of AI as a learning aid, including for "understanding materials, finding ideas, and developing writing outlines."

Despite these benefits, participants also identified limitations. S2 explained that when AI-generated outputs were not adequately verified, "the discussion was often too general." S5 reported that the information provided by AI was sometimes inaccurate, while S6 identified the possibility of inaccurate information and fabricated references. S8 similarly noted that AI-generated answers could be incorrect, lack clear sources, and be overly general.

Academic Integrity and the Boundaries of AI Use

The second theme concerned participants' understanding of the distinction between using AI as an academic aid and using it in ways that could violate academic integrity. S1 explained that ethical AI use involved using the technology to learn, generate ideas, or improve writing while "still checking the results and understanding what we are working on." Conversely, S1 considered

using AI to cheat, fabricate data, or claim AI-generated work as one's own without complying with applicable rules to constitute academic misconduct.

S3 also distinguished between using AI to support the writing process and using it to replace students' own academic efforts. S3 explained that AI could be used "to help arrange words rather than directly asking it to provide the entire academic answer." S3 further emphasized that AI should help improve sentences and that students should "not copy directly." This view was consistent with S5, who stated that AI should be an aid, "not something that replaces all of our own efforts." S6 similarly considered AI use ethical when "AI serves only as a thinking partner to support the learning process, while the final work remains one's own."

S8 emphasized the importance of personal understanding when completing assignments. According to S8, AI use was ethical when the technology served only as a learning aid, whereas academic integrity was violated when "the output is copied directly and then claimed as one's own work." S8 also mentioned the use of AI during examinations or in assignments that explicitly prohibited its use. S2 provided a more specific boundary, stating that AI use could be acceptable as long as "AI is not used to manipulate data."

From the lecturer's perspective, L1 emphasized, "AI must not replace students' thinking." L1 also identified the risks of plagiarism, dependency, inaccurate information, and privacy violations.

Information Verification as a Form of Academic Responsibility

Information verification emerged as an important theme because AI-generated outputs were not always accurate or immediately reliable. S1 explained that when requesting references relevant to an article, the information was "first checked on Google Scholar." This response indicated an effort to verify AI-generated references through other academic sources before using them.

S2 stated, "I carefully verify AI-generated outputs to ensure that they meet my needs." S3 also explained that references suggested by AI were checked again. S4 described a straightforward approach: "read the facts in books first." Meanwhile, S5 verified AI-generated information by comparing it with "books, scientific journals, or other reliable sources" and rechecking the facts and references provided.

S6 stated, "I always recheck the information using reliable primary sources, such as textbooks, scientific journals, or official websites." S7 explained that information obtained from AI was further investigated "using Indonesian statistical data." S7 also connected data checking with efforts to establish whether field data could be demonstrated in practice. S8 stated, "I do not immediately trust AI's answers." S8 typically searched for the information again using a web browser, compared it with answers generated by other AI tools, and then checked it against reliable sources such as books.

L1 also emphasized users' responsibility to verify the accuracy of AI-generated information. Participants described various verification practices, including checking references through Google Scholar and comparing information with books, journals, official websites, and statistical data.

Islamic Values as an Ethical Foundation for AI Use

The values of *amanah* (trustworthiness), honesty, and responsibility appeared in several participants' explanations of ethical AI use. S1 stated, "*Amanah* means using AI wisely, honesty means not claiming AI-generated work entirely as our own, and responsibility means checking the accuracy of the information produced." This response explicitly connected Islamic values with academic honesty and the obligation to verify information before using it.

S5 also explained that AI use was closely related to Islamic values, particularly *amanah*, honesty, and responsibility. S6 stated, "Honesty means not falsifying work." S6 further explained that *amanah* and responsibility involved maintaining trust by presenting accurate knowledge through a genuine learning process rather than taking shortcuts. S7 connected AI use with responsibility by emphasizing that research outputs should be checked against field data or factual evidence to ensure their validity.

S2 stated that AI use "depends on the intention and the person using it" and considered its use for beneficial purposes less likely to cause harm. This response emphasized the intention and purpose underlying technology use, although it did not explicitly elaborate on *amanah*, honesty, or responsibility. From the lecturer's perspective, L1 explained that *amanah* involved using AI in accordance with applicable rules, honesty meant not claiming AI-generated outputs entirely as one's own work, and responsibility required checking the accuracy of the information.

The depth of participants' explanations varied. S3's response concerning responsibility did not clearly elaborate on the relationship between Islamic values and AI use, S4 answered only "yes," and S8 did not provide a response to the question concerning Islamic values.

The Need for Value-Based AI Governance in Islamic Higher Education

The fifth theme concerned the need for clear institutional guidance on AI use. S1 suggested that Islamic higher education institutions should "provide clear guidelines on AI use, conduct education on digital ethics, and instill Islamic values." S2 emphasized the need for rules limiting AI use and stated, "impose consequences if those boundaries are violated." S3 argued that Islamic higher education institutions should not prohibit AI entirely but should provide "socialization on ethical and proper AI use."

S5 also proposed education on the wise and ethical use of AI, clear rules for academic assignments, and the promotion of academic integrity based on Islamic values. S6 suggested “clear rules on the limits of AI use, training on the ethical use of technology, and instilling Islamic values as a moral safeguard for students.” S7 considered AI useful in educational institutions, provided that its use remained consistent with religious ethical values.

From the lecturer’s perspective, L1 stated, “The rules governing AI use still need to be clarified, particularly regarding the boundaries between permitted and prohibited uses.” L1 also proposed AI ethics education and assessment practices that considered the learning process rather than focusing exclusively on final outputs. In addition, L1 emphasized the need for AI guidelines grounded in *amanah*, honesty, and responsibility, alongside efforts to strengthen AI literacy, moral character, critical thinking, and academic integrity.

Participants’ responses varied in their level of detail. S4 responded “it is up to them” when asked about institutional policies, so this response could not be interpreted as explicit support for or opposition to a particular policy proposal. S8 also did not provide a response to the question concerning institutional policy.

Discussion

The findings indicate that students used artificial intelligence (AI) to understand course materials, generate ideas, organize writing, improve language, translate drafts, and identify preliminary references. This positions AI as a learning aid rather than a substitute for student work. It is consistent with Velez and Rister’s (2025) discussion of AI-assisted authorship, which highlights responsibility for the intellectual work behind a finished text. Participants also described risks of dependence, shallow thinking, generic answers, and inaccurate references (Farhan et al., 2026; Firdaus, 2026). These accounts suggest that efficiency and learning quality do not necessarily coincide: faster production may support learning when students remain involved, but weaken independent reasoning when outputs are accepted uncritically. Theoretically, this finding encourages an understanding of educational technology as mediated by learner agency and pedagogical purpose within this particular institutional context and assessment design.

Participants distinguished acceptable assistance from dishonest use, including copying AI-generated text as one’s own, misrepresenting sources, manipulating data, or using AI where prohibited. Yet their explanations emphasized different boundaries, suggesting that academic integrity is understood in overlapping but inconsistent ways. This complements Velez and Rister’s (2025) focus on anxieties surrounding AI-assisted authorship: the issue is

not simply whether AI was used, but how authorship, disclosure, and intellectual contribution are represented. This study adds a contextual account from Islamic higher education, where participants linked responsible use to personal effort and accountability. Practically, institutions should clarify permitted, disclosure-required, and prohibited uses for different assessment tasks. Such guidance can reduce ambiguity while preserving legitimate support, rather than treating all AI assistance as equivalent misconduct across assignment types and disciplines in advance by instructors (Siswahyuningsih et al., 2026; Yusuf, 2025).

Participants reported checking AI outputs through Google Scholar, books, scholarly journals, official sources, browsers, and field data. They also recognized that responses may be overly general or contain fabricated references. This suggests that AI literacy should include evaluative judgment, not merely prompting or text production. The finding relates to Slimi and Carballido's (2023) analysis of ethical AI policies in higher education. However, interviews document reported awareness and practices; they do not establish that verification is consistently or successfully performed. Theoretically, verification can be interpreted as epistemic responsibility: users remain accountable for evidence they reproduce (Awan et al., 2026; Hasnan et al., 2026). In practice, courses should teach source tracing, fact-checking, reference validation, and comparison with primary materials before AI-generated content enters academic work, including checking that cited works actually exist before submission systematically for each assignment where relevant.

Participants connected AI use with Islamic values, particularly *amanah* (trustworthiness), honesty, and responsibility. They associated these values with wise AI use, truthful authorship, information checking, and avoiding manipulation. This reflects an attempt to translate ethical principles into academic conduct, although responses largely focused on individual behavior. Nasution et al. (2023), on values, accountability, and trust among Muslim staff in Islamic organizations, offers a conceptual comparison. This study extends that conversation to AI-mediated academic work, without suggesting that the organizational study directly explains student practices. Al-Najjar's (2022) examination of Islamization in science education also invites reflection on Islamic perspectives in educational processes. The theoretical implication is that Islamization concerns not only technology acceptance, but also the purposes, responsibilities, and institutional practices shaping its use in practice rather than abstract slogans alone.

Students and the lecturer called for clearer institutional rules, ethical education, AI literacy, and assessment attentive to learning processes as well as final products. This aligns with Slimi and Carballido's (2023) emphasis on AI ethics policies and complements Velez and Rister's (2025) discussion of

authorship concerns. The findings suggest that governance should combine guidance, education, and consistent assessment rather than rely on surveillance or punishment alone (Hady et al., 2025; Muhajir, 2025). Institutions could distinguish permitted uses, uses requiring disclosure, and prohibited uses for particular tasks; teach verification; and ask students to explain their reasoning and contributions. *Amanah*, honesty, and responsibility could guide these procedures as operational principles rather than remain general moral appeals. These recommendations arise from nine participants' accounts; they do not evaluate Universitas Nurul Jadid's formal policies or their effectiveness and regular feedback.

The study contributes by integrating students' and a lecturer's experiences with critical reflection on the Islamization of Islamic educational management. Empirically, AI appears ambivalent: it facilitates comprehension and academic production while raising concerns about dependency, accuracy, authorship, and ethical boundaries (Kurnaesih et al., 2025; Lustia et al., 2026). Conceptually, the study proposes that *amanah*, honesty, and responsibility can connect Islamic values with governance through transparent authorship, verification, clear guidance, and process-oriented assessment. This is an interpretive contribution, not a validated theoretical model. Practically, it identifies issues institutions may address through policy and teaching. Conclusions remain context-bound: the study involved eight students and one lecturer at one institution, using written online interviews with uneven response depth. Further research could compare institutions and examine policy documents and implementation to refine these implications and include perspectives from institutional leaders as well.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that artificial intelligence (AI) can support academic learning and productivity by helping students understand course materials, develop ideas, organize writing, and improve language, but its benefits depend on responsible use, independent thinking, and critical verification of information. The key lesson is that AI should function as a learning aid rather than a substitute for students' intellectual effort and academic responsibility. The study's scholarly contribution lies in connecting students' and a lecturer's experiences with a critical reconstruction of the Islamization of Islamic educational management, showing how the Islamic values of *amanah* (trustworthiness), honesty, and responsibility can inform AI ethics and institutional governance. Practically, Islamic higher education institutions should develop clear AI-use guidelines, strengthen AI literacy and information verification skills, promote transparency in academic authorship, and implement assessment practices that consider students' reasoning and learning processes. However, the findings are context-

specific, based on written online interviews with eight students and one lecturer at Universitas Nurul Jadid, and cannot be generalized to all Islamic higher education institutions. Future research should involve broader institutional contexts, more diverse participants, and analyses of formal policies and implementation practices to examine how Islamic values can be translated into effective and sustainable AI governance.

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