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Transliteration Table: Consonants

Arabic	Roman		Arabic	Roman
ب	b		ط	ṭ
ت	t		ظ	ẓ
ث	th		ع	‘
ج	j		غ	gh
ح	ḥ		ف	f
خ	kh		ق	q
د	d		ك	k
ذ	dh		ل	l
ر	r		م	m
ز	z		ن	n
س	s		ه	h
ش	sh		و	w
ص	ṣ		ء	’
ض	ḍ		ي	y

Transliteration Table: Vowels and Diphthongs

Arabic	Roman		Arabic	Roman
◌َ	a		◌ًا، ◌ًى	an
◌ُ	u		◌ٌو	un
◌ِ	i		◌ٍي	in
◌َا، ◌ٰ، ◌َى،	ā		◌َوْ	aw
◌ُو	ū		◌َيْ	ay
◌ِي	ī		◌ُوّ	uww, ū (in final position)
			◌ِيّ	iyy, ī (in final position)

Source: ROTAS Transliteration Kit: http://rotas.iium.edu.my

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Perception about Islam, Attitude, Subjective Norms, and Behavioural Intention in Using Artificial Intelligence among University Students

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Abstract: Artificial intelligence has increasingly received attention and wide acceptance among university students throughout the world. For Muslims, their behavioural intention in using artificial intelligence ethically is expected to be guided by Islamic teachings. Yet, little is known about the use of artificial intelligence among Muslim students of higher educational institutions. The present study explores how Muslim university students' perception about Islam, attitude, and subjective norms influence their behavioural intention towards using artificial intelligence in the context of Malaysia. This work extends the understanding of the influence of Islam on Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) to better explicate one's behavioural intention in using artificial intelligence. A total of 406 university students in Klang Valley, Malaysia participated in a cross-sectional survey conducted over a three-month period. Perception about Islam, attitude towards using artificial intelligence, and subjective norms were used as the independent variables, while behavioural intention to use artificial intelligence served as the dependent variable. Findings indicate a positive and significant relationship between each independent variable and behavioural intention to use artificial intelligence. Attitude towards AI emerged as the

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strongest predictor of intention to use AI, while perception on Islam becomes the weakest predictor. This study enhances theoretical insights into technology adoption from the perspectives of TRA and Islamic principles, while also providing practical guidance for developing ethically grounded AI practices within Muslim-majority educational contexts.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, attitude, Islam, subjective norms, theory of reasoned action

Abstrak: Kecerdasan buatan semakin mendapat perhatian dan penerimaan meluas dalam kalangan pelajar universiti di seluruh dunia. Bagi umat Islam, niat tingkah laku mereka dalam menggunakan kecerdasan buatan secara beretika diharapkan berpandukan ajaran Islam. Namun, sedikit yang diketahui tentang penggunaan kecerdasan buatan dalam kalangan pelajar Islam institusi pengajian tinggi. Kajian ini meneroka bagaimana persepsi pelajar universiti Islam tentang Islam, sikap, dan norma subjektif mempengaruhi niat tingkah laku mereka terhadap penggunaan kecerdasan buatan dalam konteks Malaysia. Kajian ini meluaskan pemahaman tentang pengaruh Islam terhadap Teori Tindakan Beralasan (TRA) untuk menerangkan dengan lebih baik niat tingkah laku seseorang dalam menggunakan kecerdasan buatan. Seramai 406 pelajar universiti di Lembah Klang, Malaysia menyertai tinjauan keratan rentas yang dijalankan dalam tempoh tiga bulan. Persepsi tentang Islam, sikap terhadap penggunaan kecerdasan buatan, dan norma subjektif digunakan sebagai pembolehubah bebas, manakala niat tingkah laku untuk menggunakan kecerdasan buatan berfungsi sebagai pembolehubah bersandar. Dapatan menunjukkan hubungan yang positif dan signifikan antara setiap pembolehubah tidak bersandar dan niat tingkah laku untuk menggunakan kecerdasan buatan. Sikap terhadap AI muncul sebagai peramal terkuat niat untuk menggunakan AI, manakala persepsi terhadap Islam menjadi peramal yang paling lemah. Kajian ini meningkatkan pandangan teori ke dalam penggunaan teknologi daripada perspektif TRA dan prinsip Islam, di samping menyediakan panduan praktikal untuk membangunkan amalan AI berasaskan etika dalam konteks pendidikan majoriti Muslim.

Kata kunci: Kecerdasan buatan, sikap, Islam, norma subjektif, teori tindakan beralasan

Introduction

In tandem with the rapid technological changes, artificial intelligence (AI) is growing swiftly and gaining increasing attention (Kavanagh, 2019, Shen et al., 2025) among citizens in the twenty first century. AI has become an essential tool for enriching various aspects of real-world applications, such as medical diagnosis, face recognition, robotics, internet applications, data mining, and industrial applications (G*ó*rriz et.al., 2020). The rapid advancement of AI technologies has transformed various sectors, including education, healthcare, and business (Kaushik, 2023; Agarwal, Swami, & Malhotra, 2024; Neha et.al., 2020). In the context of higher education, AI adoption has risen quickly in the last five years (Chu et al., 2022), with applications in assessment and evaluation, prediction, AI assistance, Intelligent Tutoring System (ITS), and student learning management (Crompton & Burke, 2023).

According to UNESCO, the AI technology has drawn the attention of educators and has been embraced by numerous countries worldwide (Gianini, 2023). Its capacity to assist students in producing essays, summaries, letters, artworks, and more has contributed to its widespread use in academic settings. While offers significant benefits - such as accuracy, efficiency, and personalisation— it also introduces ethical risks and challenges if not used properly (Murphy, 2019; Nasho & Awuye, 2025). Consequently, a sound ethical framework is crucial to ensure that AI is used responsibly and meaningfully within educational institutions.

From an Islamic perspective, ethics and moral conduct and values are rooted in divine guidance derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah. The Qur'an declares, *"Verily in this (Qur'an) is a Message for people who would (truly) worship Allah"* (Quran, 21:106), affirming its role as a moral compass for human conduct ('Alwānī, 1995). The Sunnah complements the Qur'an by offering practical demonstrations of ethical principles (Abdul Rahman, 2023). Hence, the Islamic worldview provides an integral foundation for examining the moral and ethical use of emerging technologies such as AI (Eldeib et al., 2025). Integrating these sources into modern discussions on AI allows for an academically grounded interpretation of how Islamic ethics guide technology adoption—an area still underexplored in empirical AI studies.

While numerous models have been used to study AI adoption and behavioural intention—such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), and Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT)—these frameworks are largely derived from Western epistemologies and lack religious or spiritual dimensions. There remains a critical gap in understanding how Islamic principles influence behavioural intentions towards AI usage, particularly among Muslim university students. Addressing this gap is vital, as the ethical use of AI in Muslim-majority educational contexts must align with the moral teachings of Islam and the broader objectives of the *maqasid al-shariah* (objectives of Islamic law).

Therefore, this study explores the ethical use of AI for academic activities among Muslim university students in accordance with Islamic teachings. Specifically, it examines how perceptions of Islamic values attitude towards AI interact to shape behavioural intentions to use AI responsibly. The study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the attitude of university students towards AI?
2. What is the relationship between university students' attitude towards AI and their behavioural intention to use AI?
3. What is the relationship between subjective norms towards AI and behavioural intention to use AI among university students?
4. What is the relationship between university students' perception about Islamic teachings and their behavioural intention to use AI?
5. What is the best predictor of university students' intention to use AI?

Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education

The term "artificial intelligence" was first coined by McCarthy in 1956 (Crompton & Burke, 2023). Since then, its meaning has evolved alongside the rapid expansion of research in diverse fields, including education. Fetzer (1990) defines AI as the study and creation of artifacts—machines or systems—that exhibit intelligence as a result of being purposely designed by humans, distinguishing them from natural intelligence. In his critique of the traditional computational paradigm, AI is described as a computer program that manipulates symbolic representations according to rules to solve reasoning tasks. Despite extensive debate, the definitions and interpretations of intelligence remain contested,

with many approaches focusing narrowly on cognitive functions while overlooking social, philosophical, and contextual dimensions. Given that this study focuses on the influence of AI within higher education, it adopts the more contemporary definition by Popenici and Kerr (2017, p. 2), who describe AI as "computing systems that are able to engage in human-like processes such as learning, adapting, synthesising, self-correction and use of data for complex processing tasks." This definition aligns well with the pedagogical and administrative functions of universities in Malaysia that increasingly rely on intelligent systems to enhance learning, teaching, and institutional management.

AI is becoming a critical driver of transformation in **higher education**, reshaping how universities approach teaching, learning, and assessment (Wang & Steele, 2025). Beyond improving efficiency or automating administrative work, AI encourages a fundamental rethinking of education towards personalised, adaptive, and data-driven learning experiences. Within the Malaysian higher education context, this transformation aligns with the Ministry of Higher Education's aspiration to integrate the 4th Industrial Revolution (IR4.0) and AI technologies under the Malaysia Education Blueprint (Higher Education) 2015–2025. AI applications such as predictive analytics for student performance, intelligent tutoring systems, and automated assessment tools are increasingly adopted across Malaysian universities to improve learning outcomes and institutional decision-making.

Globally, the intersection of AI and higher education has drawn significant scholarly attention. A systematic review study conducted by Crompton and Burke (2023) found a total of 138 studies conducted in 31 countries across six continents, with Asia contributing 41% of the total research. However, most of these studies originated from Taiwan and China, indicating a regional imbalance. In contrast, research on AI in Malaysian higher education remains comparatively limited, despite the nation's growing investment in digital transformation initiatives such as the Malaysia Artificial Intelligence Roadmap (2021–2025) published in 2023. Malaysia's unique multicultural and predominantly Muslim context offers a distinct lens through which AI adoption can be examined. Perceptions of AI among students in Malaysian higher education institutions may be shaped not only by technological readiness but also by ethical and spiritual considerations grounded in Islamic values. Understanding these perceptions is therefore essential

to designing AI-driven educational strategies that are both culturally relevant and pedagogically effective in the Malaysian higher education landscape.

The present study was conducted in Malaysia. Although Malaysia is also an Asian country, its culture is different from Taiwan and China as its population is dominated by Muslims. In this regard, perception about AI, viewed from an Islamic lens, among students of higher educational institutions is a contributing factor in determining their behavioural intention towards AI.

Attitudes, Subjective Norms, and Behavioural Intention towards AI

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) posits that an individual's intention to engage in a particular behaviour is shaped by both their personal attitude toward the behaviour and the perceived social norms associated with it (Ajzen, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen 1975). In other words, when individuals hold favourable evaluations of a behaviour and believe that significant others endorse it, they are more likely to form the intention to perform that behaviour. Foundationally, attitude refers to an individual's overall evaluation of a target behaviour (e.g. using AI for learning), which can be positive or negative. Besides, subjective norms capture perceived social pressures from important others (e.g. peers, instructors, institutions) regarding whether one should perform the behaviour, and these norms shape intentions alongside attitudes and perceived behavioural control (Ajzen 1991). Behavioural intention, in turn, is the proximal antecedent of actual behaviour; higher education contexts have increasingly treated AI use in learning as the target behaviour for which intention predicts adoption or use.

Recent empirical works in higher education have examined subjective norms and attitudes as predictors of the intention to engage in AI. Asio and Gadia (2024) identified the predictors of students' attitudes towards AI and discussed the implications for higher education institutions, highlighting how attitudes relate to adoption considerations in university settings. Ma, Akram, and Chen (2024) conducted a cross-cultural examination of students' behavioural intentions and attitudes towards AI in higher education, underscoring how cultural context can shape the strength and direction of the effects of attitudes and norms on intention. In a study focusing on the determinants of students' attitudes

and intentions towards AI in education, Wang, Zhang, and Gong (2024) provided evidence on how attitudinal evaluations and intentions to engage with AI in education are shaped by educational experiences and perceived value of AI-enhanced learning. Zulkifli and Alias (2025) examined students' intention to use digital tools, illustrating the integration of TRA constructs (attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control) in predicting the intention to engage with AI-enabled or AI-related educational tools. Collectively, these studies have produced consistent findings: attitudes and perceived social expectations (subjective norms) strongly influence students' behavioural intentions to adopt AI in higher education, with cross-cultural and contextual factors moderating the strength of these associations (Asio & Gadio, 2024; Ma, Akram, & Chen, 2024; Wang, Zhang, & Gong; Zulkifli & Alias, 2025).

Apart from these contemporary works, several other recent contributions have illustrated how attitudes towards AI and the social environment around the use of AI in universities translate into intention and eventual use. For example, Musawa, al-Malik, and Khan (2024) reported on attitudes, readiness, and intention towards AI adoption in education in the context of a major conference, signalling that institutional and peer context shape the evaluation and willingness to adopt AI in academic settings. Malik et al. (2023) explored students' perspectives on AI in academic essays, offering qualitative and quantitative insights into how students perceive AI as part of their scholarly work, which bears on attitudes and perceived norms surrounding AI usage in higher education. Implications for practice include directing attention to shaping favourable attitudes towards AI through demonstrable benefits (e.g., enhanced learning outcomes and efficiency) and addressing social norms through peer and instructor messaging, curricula that normalise AI use, and institutional policies that articulate acceptable uses and ethical considerations (Asio & Gadia, 2024; Ma et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024). Based on this discussion, the present study hypothesised that:

H_1: University students have a positive attitude towards artificial intelligence.

H_2: University students with a positive attitude towards artificial intelligence will have a stronger behavioural intention to adopt AI technologies.

H_3: Subjective norms significantly influence university students' behavioural intentions to use artificial intelligence, with higher perceived social pressure leading to greater intentions to adopt AI.

Learning with AI in Islamic perspectives

Previous studies have examined the adoption of technology in various contexts (Kaushik, 2023; Agarwal, Swami, & Malhotra, 2024; Neha et al., 2020). However, few have integrated religious perspectives, particularly in Muslim-majority settings. This study highlights the importance of understanding how Islamic teachings can inform ethical considerations in technology use, thereby filling a significant gap in existing research. In Muslim-majority settings, the perceptions of AI may be informed by Islamic values and ethical considerations. The integration of AI in education among Muslims not only enhances efficiency but also reinforces moral and spiritual values while promoting inclusivity, spiritual values, and justice in educational access (Mahmudulhassan et. al., 2024).

Previous studies indicate that Muslim students often evaluate AI technologies through the lens of Islamic ethics, assessing their potential impact on moral values. This perspective can lead to a cautious approach towards AI applications seen to be in conflict with Islamic teachings. Importantly, the role of lecturers and educational institutions in providing guidance on the ethical implications of AI is also significant. Research by Syukur et al. (2024) revealed that students of Darul Maarif University in Petidam, Thailand, were very careful about the impact of technology on Islamic values. Although AI has not been formally integrated in the university courses, AI has sparked concerns about its effect on the role of traditional Islamic religious teachers and cultural values in the institution.

What the current body of work suggests, in lieu of direct Islam-specific empirical studies, is that religio-ethical considerations may shape attitudes and subjective norms towards AI adoption in ways that TPB/TRA can accommodate. For example, a cross-cultural work on AI attitudes and behaviour (Ma et al., 2024) highlights how broader cultural and value systems influence students' intentions, which in Muslim-majority or Islamist-influenced contexts may reflect Islamic

ethical considerations as part of cultural norms. Similarly, studies examining student attitudes towards AI in higher education emphasise the importance of ethical and responsible AI use and alignment with educational values, which are relevant to Islamic ethical discourse (Asio & Gadia, 2024; Wang et al., 2024). These lines of work imply that Islamic teachings could operate as a moderator or contextual factor shaping attitudes and subjective norms, thereby affecting behavioural intentions to adopt AI. Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H_4: There is a significant positive relationship between university students' perception about Islamic teachings and their behavioural intentions to use AI.

Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which was developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1970). TRA posits that an individual's behavioural intention, determined by attitude towards the behaviours and subjective norms, is the strongest predictor of actual behaviour (Fishben & Ajzen, 1975; Ajzen, 1985). While attitude reflects the person's overall positive or negative evaluation of performing a behaviour, subjective norms represent the perceived social pressure from important referents to engage in, or refrain from, the behaviour (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). TRA assumes individuals as rational decision-makers who evaluate the expected outcomes of their behaviour and the opinions of significant others before forming an intention (Ajzen, 1985). When Muslims view AI as aligning with Islamic principles—such as justice, fairness, and the responsible use of knowledge—they tend to develop more positive attitudes and a stronger intention to adopt it.

In the present study, TRA provides the theoretical foundation for understanding university students' intention to use artificial intelligence (AI) in learning. The model explains how students' internal evaluations (attitudes) and external pressures (subjective norms) shape their intention to adopt AI tools. To contextualise TRA within an Islamic educational environment, the variable perception about Islamic teachings is included as an additional belief-based construct influencing intention. In Islamic contexts, technology adoption decisions are not value-neutral; they are often filtered through perceptions of religious alignment, ethical appropriateness, and the pursuit of beneficial knowledge (*'ilm nafi'*).

Therefore, students' perception about Islam is expected to play a significant role in shaping how they evaluate and intend to use AI.

While the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) have been widely used to study technology adoption, these models primarily emphasise utilitarian beliefs such as perceived usefulness and ease of use. However, they often overlook the influence of moral, cultural, and religious values on behavioural intention. The TRA is more suitable for this study because it incorporates the influence of beliefs and normative pressures that extend beyond performance-based evaluations. This makes it well-suited for examining technology adoption in a faith-oriented academic environment.

Empirical evidence supports this theoretical orientation. Mohr and Kühl (2021) applied TRA and Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) to the adoption of AI in agriculture. They found that subjective norms significantly influenced behavioural intention, confirming TRA's predictive power in technology adoption. Similarly, Sohn and Kwon (2020) further demonstrated that attitude and subjective norms predicted consumers' intention to adopt AI-based products. TRA is often used in fields like health psychology, marketing, and public policy to understand how attitudes and social influences affect decision-making and behaviour. In the educational settings, Naseri and Abdullah (2023) emphasised that TRA constructs are essential to understanding students' intention to adopt emerging technologies like AI, particularly in culturally sensitive contexts. Choung et al. (2022) further highlighted that users' ethical comfort and trust in AI systems significantly shape their attitudes, which subsequently predict behavioural intention.

Drawing on these insights, this study extends TRA by incorporating perception about Islamic teachings as a belief-based independent variable. It is posited that when students perceive AI as consistent with Islamic principles—such as promoting justice, fairness, and responsible use of knowledge—they are more likely to form favourable attitudes and stronger intentions to use it. Conversely, if AI is viewed as conflicting with Islamic ethics, students' adoption intention may weaken. Accordingly, the **conceptual framework** (see Figure 1) was developed for this study as follows:

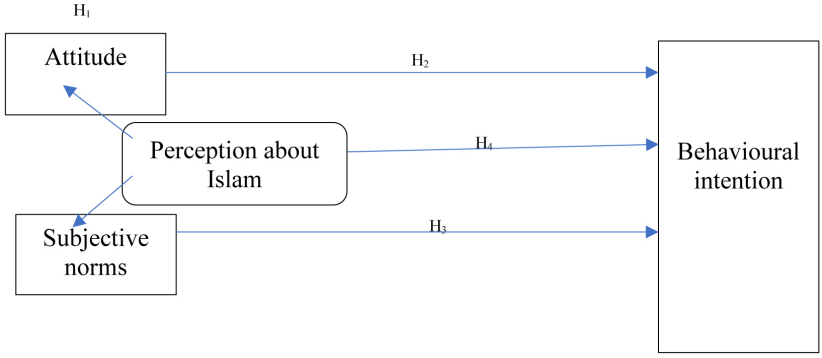

Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the study

The framework aligns with the TRA causal logic, where beliefs and social pressures shape behavioural intentions. In this adapted model, attitude, subjective norms, and perception about Islamic teachings serve as independent variables that directly influence behavioural intention to use AI. This structure establishes a coherent link between the theoretical foundation and the study's hypotheses. Based on the adapted Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) framework, four hypotheses were developed to examine how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceptions about Islamic teachings influence students' behavioural intention to use AI in learning.

Methodology

A cross-sectional survey was conducted among Muslim university students in an international Islamic university located in Klang Valley, Malaysia. Data collection ran from October to December 2023. Participants were selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across ten different departments in a faculty. The researchers divided the proportion of respondents based on the two main divisions in the faculty: Human Sciences (60%) and Islamic Revealed Knowledge (40%), and from the total number of actively registered undergraduate students in 2023. Further, students were randomly selected to ensure adequate representation between both divisions, based on the Human Sciences Departments (i.e., Communication, English Language and Literature, Sociology and Anthropology, History and Civilisation, Psychology. Political Science) and Islamic Revealed Knowledge Departments (i.e., Arabic Language and Literature, Qur'an and Sunnah Studies, Fiqh and Usul al-Fiqh, and Usul al-din and Comparative Religion). A Google Form was constructed to collect

data, and a survey questionnaire was distributed online. Respondents were required to fill in a consent form before responding to the survey. Initially, 410 responses were received but after eliminating duplicate responses, the study obtained a total final sample size of 406. Based on the total number of students actively registered (i.e., 3624), Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size table determined that the minimum sample size based on the total population is 364, and this criterion was met in this study.

Measures

The survey instrument included validated scales measuring perception about Islam, attitude towards AI, subjective norms, and behavioural intention to use AI.

Subjective norms in using AI

Subjective norms in using AI was adapted from the scale by Chai, Wang, and Xu (2020). Subjective norms refer to the social influence in adopting a behaviour, defined as "how one perceives socially important others such as parents, friends, and teachers may expect one to act" (Chai, Wang, & Xu, 2020, p. 3). They found the internal consistency of the scale reliable (Cronbach's alpha = .808). In this study, subjective norms are contextualised as the social influence by others in one's intention to use AI technology to complete academic tasks. This construct contains four items measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. An example of the items reads, "Most people I know think I should learn about AI technology." Higher scores indicate stronger social influence by others, such as course mates and lecturers, to use AI technology to complete academic tasks.

Attitude in using AI technology

Attitude in using AI technology was also adapted from the scale introduced by Chai, Wang, and Xu (2020). In this study, attitude towards the behaviour of using AI includes an individual's expectations and feelings about the possible consequences of adopting AI technology to complete academic tasks. It contains three items and is also measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. An example of the items is "Using AI technology is pleasant." Chai, Wang, and Xu (2020) also found the internal consistency of the scale reliable (Cronbach's alpha = .844). Higher scores indicate a

more positive attitude towards using AI technology when completing academic tasks.

Behavioural intention in using AI in academic tasks

Behavioural intention in using AI to complete academic tasks was also taken from the study by Chai, Wang, and Xu (2020). It is contextualised in this study as future intention to use AI technology. It contains four items and is also measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. An example of the item reads, "I will pay attention to emerging AI applications." Chai, Wang, and Xu (2020) found the internal consistency of the scale very reliable (Cronbach's alpha = .913). Higher scores indicate a stronger intention to use AI technology in completing academic tasks.

Perception about Islam

Perception about Islam is measured using the Ethical Conduct-Do Dimension subscale from the psychological measure of Islamic religiousness (PMIR) scale, and it consists of five items (Raiya, 2008). The participants were asked to respond to each item on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. The higher the score, the higher the level of "do." This subscale demonstrated very high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .95).

A reliability test was performed to check the consistency and accuracy of the measurement scales. The results in Table 1 indicate that the Cronbach's alpha coefficients are satisfactory (between .95 and .98), indicating that the questions for a particular construct measure a similar concept and they are internally consistent (Cronbach, 1951).

Table 1: Reliability Analysis for Selected Variables

Variable	No. of items	Cronbach's alpha
Perception about Islam	5	.923
Attitude towards AI	3	.890
Behavioural intention	4	.862
Subjective norms	4	.800

Statistical Analyses

Hypothesis 1 was tested using a one sample *t*-test, and hypotheses 2, 3, and 4 were analysed using Pearson correlations to examine the influence of university students' attitudes, perception about Islam, and subjective norms on their behavioural intention to use AI. Finally, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to identify the best predictor of university students' intention to use AI in completing academic tasks.

Findings and analysis

Descriptive analyses were used to describe the background of the respondents. The total number of 406 respondents participated in this study. The analyses show that the majority of respondents were female (75%). They were relatively young, with the majority (76.5%) in the 20–21 years old age group, followed by 22–23 years old (17%) and 18–19 years old (0.16%) age groups. The survey respondents also performed well in their studies. About 70% of them obtained a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 3.0 and above, while 28% were considered moderate in their academic performance with a CGPA between 2.51 and 3.0. Only a small percentage (2%) of the respondents obtained a low CGPA (2.5 and below). The respondents consisted of students from both the six Human Sciences and four Islamic Revealed Knowledge (41%) departments in the faculty. Since this study was conducted in an Islamic university, all respondents were Muslim undergraduate students. The respondents' profiles are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Profile of respondents

Socio-demographic profile of respondents		Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	25.0
	Female	75.0
Age	18–19 years old	0.16
	20–21 years old	76.5
	22–23 years old	17.0
CGPA	Low (0–2.5)	2.7
	Moderate (2.51–3.00)	27.6
	High (3.01 above)	69.7
Department	Human Sciences	59%
	Islamic Revealed Knowledge	41%

Attitudes of university students towards AI

A one-sample *t*-test was conducted to test H_1. The test assessed whether students' mean was significantly higher than the neutral midpoint of the scale (3.00). Based on the analysis, the attitude of university students towards AI was higher (M = 3.85, SD = 0.72) than the test score of 3, t (365) = 22.7, $p < .001$. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics and one-sample *t*-test results for the three items measuring students' attitude towards AI technology. All three items recorded mean scores above 3.80, indicating that students generally perceived using AI technology as enjoyable, fun, and pleasant.

Moreover, the *t*-test results were highly significant ($p < .05$) for all items, confirming that students' ratings were significantly higher than the neutral midpoint of the scale. Therefore, H_1 is supported. University students showed a positive attitude towards artificial intelligence.

Table 3: One Sample *t*-test on University Students' Attitude towards AI

Items	*M*	*SD*	*df*	*t*	*p*
Using AI technology is pleasant.	3.8224	.76473	365	20.574	.001
I find using AI technology enjoyable.	3.8770	.78595	365	21.349	.001
I have fun using AI technology.	3.8661	.82833	365	20.004	.001

Relationships between university students' attitude, perception about Islam, subjective norms, and behavioural intention to use AI

Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to examine the influence of university students' attitudes, perception about Islam, and subjective norms on their behavioural intention to use AI. The descriptive statistics and correlations among variables are presented in Table 4. Students reported a moderately positive attitude towards AI (M = 3.85, SD = 0.72), moderate subjective norms (M = 0.72, SD = 0.58), and a moderate intention to use AI (M = 0.71, SD = 0.71).

As hypothesised in H_2, students' attitude towards AI was positively and significantly correlated with their intention to use AI, $r(366)$ = .58, $p < .01$, indicating that students with more favourable attitudes

reported stronger intentions to adopt AI technologies. Supporting H_3, subjective norms were also positively related to students' intention to use AI, $r(366) = .51$, $p < .01$, suggesting that higher perceived social pressure was associated with greater behavioural intention to adopt AI. Finally, in line with H_4, perception about Islamic teachings showed a significant positive correlation with intention to use AI, $r(366) = .26$, $p < .01$, indicating that students who perceived AI adoption as compatible with Islamic principles reported stronger intentions to use AI.

These findings collectively support the proposed hypotheses, highlighting the roles of attitude, social influence, and religious perception in predicting students' behavioural intentions towards AI adoption.

Table 4: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among Variables

Variable	*n*	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4
Attitude	366	3.85	.72	-			
Subjective norm	366	.72	.59	.46**	-		
Perception about Islam	366	4.56	.58	.23**	.21**	-	
Behavioural Intention	366	.71	.71	.58**	.51**	.26**	-

Note: *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

To determine the strongest predictor of university students' behavioural intention to use artificial intelligence, the study performed a multiple regression using perception about Islam, attitude towards AI, and subjective norms as predictors. The overall model was significant, $F(3, 362) = 90.50$, $p < .001$, and all predictor variables accounted for approximately 42.9% of the variance in behavioural intention to use AI ($R^2 = .43$).

As shown in Table 5, attitude towards AI emerged as the strongest predictor of intention to use AI (ß = .42, $p < .001$), indicating that students with more positive attitudes reported greater intention to adopt AI technologies. Subjective norms were the second strongest predictor (ß = .30, $p < .001$), suggesting that perceived social pressure or support significantly influenced students' intentions to use AI. Perception about Islamic teachings also significantly, though weaker, predicted

behavioural intention (ß = .10, $p < .001$), indicating that alignment with religious principles contributed to students' willingness to adopt AI.

Table 5: Multiple Regression for Students' Behavioural Intention to Use AI

Variable	*ß*	*SE*	*SE* ß	*P*
Attitude	.42	.26***	.42	.001
Subjective norms	.36	.04***	.30	.001
Perception about Islam	.13	.05	.10	.001
R^2	.429			
F	90.5			

Overall, the analysis revealed that perception about Islam, attitude towards AI, and subjective norms had significant positive relationships with behavioural intention to use AI. Specifically, students who perceived Islamic teachings as supportive of ethical AI usage demonstrated increased intentions to adopt AI technologies. The findings indicate that when students believe that their religious beliefs align with the ethical use of AI, they are more likely to have a positive attitude towards its adoption. Additionally, subjective norms, or the perceived social pressure to engage with AI, also played a crucial role in shaping their intentions.

Discussion

The present study examined university students' attitudes towards AI and the factors influencing their behavioural intention to adopt AI technologies. The results provide empirical support for all the proposed hypotheses and offer both theoretical and practical insights. The findings confirm that the first hypothesis, which states that university students hold a positive attitude towards AI, is supported. Results of one-sample *t*-test revealed that students generally perceived AI as enjoyable, fun, and pleasant, indicating a readiness to engage with emerging technologies in learning contexts. This result aligns with the findings of Wang et al. (2024), who reported that positive attitudes are central in predicting technology acceptance. However, this study extends prior work by demonstrating that Malaysian students' favourable attitudes toward AI are not only influenced by perceived usefulness and enjoyment but also by growing exposure to AI in academic settings. This indicates that as AI becomes more visible in higher education, students are

increasingly open to its pedagogical integration, thereby reinforcing the generalisability of attitude as a key determinant of AI adoption.

Furthermore, the role of subjective norms highlights the influence of peer and societal expectations on students' decisions to engage with AI. This suggests that fostering a supportive community that encourages ethical AI use could further enhance students' intentions to adopt these technologies. This finding is consistent with Li et al. (2022), who found that both attitude and subjective norms significantly shape behavioural intentions. However, cross-cultural comparison provides additional insight: in collectivist cultures such as Malaysia, social influence tends to play a stronger role than in individualist contexts (Alhugbani, 2025; Schoefer et al., 2025). In such settings, individuals often look to peers, lecturers, and institutional authorities for cues about acceptable behaviour. The present study's findings suggest that while subjective norms are important, their effect is slightly weaker than attitude—indicating that students are guided both by personal evaluations of AI's usefulness and by social endorsement. This balance reflects Malaysia's transitional cultural orientation, which blends collectivist values with increasing individual agency in technology use.

The results of this study underscore the importance of integrating religious perspectives into the discourse on technology adoption, particularly in Muslim-majority contexts. The positive correlation between students' perception about Islam and their behavioural intentions suggests that religion can serve as a moral framework for guiding ethical AI use. Educational institutions could leverage this by incorporating Islamic ethical principles—such as justice, responsibility, and the pursuit of beneficial knowledge—into AI-related curricula and initiatives. By doing so, educational institutions could enhance students' understanding and acceptance of AI technologies while ensuring that their use aligns with their values.

Nevertheless, the study finds that compared to attitude and subjective norms, perception about Islam perception of Islam was found to be a weaker predictor of behavioural intention. This may be because students view AI as a neutral technological tool rather than a religious or moral issue. Moreover, as Syukur et al. (2024) noted, Islamic universities often engage with AI implicitly through research and workshops rather than through formal curricular integration. The absence of explicit

institutional policies or frameworks linking AI with Islamic principles may weaken the perceived connection between faith and technology adoption. Addressing this gap through structured discourse and policy could strengthen students' ethical and purposeful engagement with AI in the future.

Implications of the study

This study's findings provide meaningful contributions to the literature on technology adoption through the lens of TRA by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980). TRA posits that an individual's behavioural intention is primarily influenced by their attitude towards the behaviour and subjective norms. In line with TRA, this study demonstrates that university students' positive attitudes towards AI and their perceived social pressure significantly predict their intention to adopt AI technologies. The strong predictive power of attitude highlights the centrality of individual evaluation in shaping technology adoption behaviour.

Moreover, this study extends TRA by incorporating students' perception about Islamic teachings as a contextual factor, thus adding a cultural-religious dimension to the model. The significant, though weaker, effect of religious perception suggests that moral and ethical considerations can enhance the explanatory power of TRA in culturally and religiously sensitive contexts. This highlights the potential of extending classical behavioural models to integrate socio-religious variables in understanding technology adoption in non-Western settings.

The results of this study also offer practical insights for educators, policy makers, and AI developers in higher education. Since attitude has been identified as the strongest predictor of adoption, higher education institutions should focus on training programmes, demonstrations, and workshops that highlight AI's practical benefits and enjoyable applications in learning. Workshops, seminars, and collaborative projects that explore the intersection of technology and ethics —such as discussions on the responsible use of AI-generated content and the ethical boundaries of plagiarism—can effectively shape students' positive yet principled engagement with AI. Studies suggest that educational programmes that incorporate discussions of AI with ethical considerations from an Islamic perspective can positively influence students' attitudes (Sain et al., 2024).

In addition, since subjective norms significantly shape behavioural intention, universities can encourage faculty and peer champions to integrate AI into teaching and research, thereby creating a supportive culture for AI adoption. Since perceptions about Islamic teachings influence adoption. Communicating AI use in ways consistent with Islamic ethical principles—such as ensuring fairness and transparency in AI-assisted grading or protecting student data privacy in AI learning platforms—will reassure students that technological innovation is compatible with their moral and religious values. Incorporating AI literacy and ethics modules into the curriculum will prepare students to engage with AI responsibly while fostering technical competence and mental awareness.

Limitations and recommendations for future studies

Despite its contributions, the study has limitations. First, the cross-sectional design restricts causal inference, thus restricts the ability to infer causality among the variables. Future research could employ longitudinal designs, make cross-cultural comparisons, and examine additional psychological or contextual factors, such as perceived risk, trust in AI, or ethical concerns, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of AI adoption in higher education. Second, the study was conducted within a specific context—university students in Malaysia—which may limit the generalisability of the findings to other cultural or educational settings. Replicating the study in different countries or among diverse student populations could provide comparative insights and strengthen the external validity of the results.

Additionally, this study opens avenues for further exploration into the role of religious beliefs in technology adoption across different cultural contexts. Future research could expand on this study by examining other religious perspectives or by exploring longitudinal changes in attitudes and intentions as AI technologies evolve. In addition, future research may consider integrating other theoretical models such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) or Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) to compare their predictive power with the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). Researchers could also explore additional variables, such as perceived usefulness, trust in AI, or ethical concerns, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of AI adoption behaviour. Qualitative approaches, such as interviews

or focus groups, may further enrich the findings by capturing deeper insights into students' motivations and concerns regarding AI usage in education.

Conclusion

University students' behavioural intention to use AI is shaped by a combination of personal attitude, social influences, and cultural-religious factors, with attitude being the most influential predictor. This study highlights that fostering positive perceptions, supportive environments, and ethical alignment are key to accelerating AI integration in higher education, ultimately preparing students for active participation in the AI-driven future.

From a practical perspective, the findings highlight the need for higher education institutions to cultivate positive attitudes towards AI through awareness programs, hands-on training, and ethical discourse. Universities should also foster supportive peer and institutional environments that normalise AI usage in academic settings.

Notably, this study contributes to the understanding of how Islamic perceptions influence university students' behavioural intentions to use AI. Importantly, aligning AI education and practice with Islamic ethical principles—such as fairness, accountability, and the responsible use of knowledge—can strengthen students' confidence and willingness to engage with AI technologies responsibly. By integrating TRA with religious perspectives, this study provides a comprehensive understanding of the contributing factors that drive technology adoption in Muslim communities. The positive relationships identified in this research suggest that aligning AI use with ethical considerations rooted in Islamic teachings can promote a more responsible and accepted integration of AI technologies among students.

Future educational policies and curriculum designs can therefore benefit from embedding both technological competence and moral consciousness, ensuring that AI integration in higher education contributes to holistic student development. In this way, the study not only enriches the theoretical understanding of technology adoption through the lens of TRA and Islamic perspectives but also offers actionable guidance for creating ethically grounded AI practices in Muslim-majority learning environments.

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(i) Al-Bukhārī, M. (1981). *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr.
(ii) Ibn Ḥanbal, A. (1982). *Musnad Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal*. Istanbul: Cagri Yayinlari.

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