



## Artificial Intelligence and Social Sciences from an Islamic Perspective on Morality and Responsibility

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### Abstract

This study examines the intersection of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and social sciences through the ethical framework of Islamic morality and human responsibility. The core objective is to evaluate how AI applications in areas such as education, psychology, media, and governance align or conflict with Islamic ethical principles, particularly in relation to justice, accountability, and human dignity. The study targets scholars and postgraduate students in Islamic Studies, Sociology, and Philosophy across five Nigerian universities. A sample of 100 respondents was selected using purposive sampling. Data were gathered through structured questionnaires and key informant interviews. Quantitative responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency and mean ranking) and inferential statistics (Chi-square and Pearson correlation), while qualitative data underwent thematic content analysis. Findings reveal that 81% of respondents believe AI can complement social science practices if guided by Islamic ethics. The paper concludes that, stakeholders across Islamic Studies, Sociology, and Philosophy in Nigeria strongly support the ethical regulations but is also of the opinion that, there is the need to re-evaluate AI mechanisms to incorporate Islamic ethics and morality in technology. In the light of the above, the paper recommends the need for training programs and workshops between Islamic scholars (*'Ulamā'*), computer scientists, ethicists, and sociologists, so as to bridge the gap between technical expertise and moral reasoning and secondly, the inclusion of Islamic ethical guideline for the development of Artificial Intelligence informed by the principles of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, *taklīf*, and *mas'ūliyyah* in order to operate within the bounds of justice, accountability, and human dignity in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, Social Sciences, Morality, Responsibility.

### Introduction

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into the social sciences is profoundly transforming how societies operate, reshaping communication, governance, education, media, and psychological practice. While AI offers unprecedented precision and efficiency, it simultaneously raises critical ethical questions concerning moral agency, justice, transparency, and the preservation of human dignity (Boddington, 2017, p. 15; Russell & Norvig, 2020, p. 102). These challenges are not merely technical; they are deeply philosophical concerns that require engagement with moral frameworks grounded in human values.

Islamic ethics, developed over centuries through the Qur'an, *Sunnah*, and scholarly consensus, offers a comprehensive moral framework that is particularly relevant in the age of AI. Core Islamic principles, such as the sanctity of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), preservation of intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), and the duty of trust (*amānah*) speak directly to contemporary ethical concerns involving data exploitation, algorithmic bias, and declining accountability (Al-Ghazālī, 2002, p. 88; Auda, 2008, p. 34; Al-Qaradāwī, 1992, p. 104). However, dominant AI ethics discourses remain largely rooted in secular Western paradigms, often lacking sensitivity to the cultural, spiritual, and legal norms of Muslim societies.

This study responds to this gap by examining how Islamic moral teachings can inform and guide the ethical application of AI within the domains traditionally explored by the social sciences. In doing so, it bridges the growing divide between rapid technological development and the ethical expectations of Muslim communities. Nigeria provides a valuable context for this inquiry due to its strong tradition of Islamic scholarship alongside increasing technological adoption. This study aims to contribute to a more inclusive and pluralistic AI ethics discourse one that reflects the lived moral concerns of Muslims and prevents ethical alienation among AI users and developers.

Accordingly, the study underscores the relevance of Islamic ethical concepts such as *'adl* (justice), *shūrā* (consultative decision-making), and *taklīf* (moral accountability) in evaluating the societal impact of AI (Kamali, 2010, pp. 82–90; Al-Shātibī, 1997, p. 66). By engaging scholars in sociology, psychology, media, and governance, this research highlights the urgency of examining technological change through religious–ethical lenses. It ensures that digital innovation does not erode ethical integrity or disrupt social harmony. Thus, the study evaluates AI from an Islamic moral perspective across education, psychology, media, and governance using insights from 100 purposively selected scholars and postgraduate students in Islamic Studies, Sociology, and Philosophy from five Nigerian universities.

## Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-method research design integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to obtain a comprehensive understanding of AI's ethical implications from an Islamic perspective. Mixed-method designs are particularly suitable for examining complex social and ethical phenomena, allowing both statistical analysis and interpretive depth (Creswell, 2014, p. 215; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010, p. 23).

The study population consists of scholars and postgraduate students in Islamic Studies, Sociology, and Philosophy. A purposive (non-probability) sampling technique was employed to ensure the inclusion of participants with sufficient knowledge and engagement with AI-related ethical issues (Etikan et al., 2016, p. 2).

Data were collected using structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency counts and mean scores) and inferential statistics (chi-square and Pearson correlation), while qualitative data were analyzed thematically to identify recurring ethical concerns (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79).

## Research Objectives

The primary aim of this study is to explore the ethical compatibility of Artificial Intelligence (AI) with Islamic principles, particularly within the context of the social sciences. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine how AI applications in education, psychology, media, and governance affect moral responsibility and human dignity from an Islamic perspective.
2. Assess the awareness, perceptions, and concerns of scholars and students in Islamic Studies, Sociology, and Philosophy regarding the ethical implications of AI.
3. Identify the areas of convergence and divergence between Islamic moral philosophy and current AI ethical practices.
4. Recommend strategies for incorporating Shariah-compliant ethical guidelines into the development and governance of AI systems.

## Research Questions

- i) How do AI applications in education, psychology, media, and governance influence moral responsibility and human dignity from an Islamic ethical perspective?
- ii) What are the levels of awareness, perceptions, and concerns among scholars and students in Islamic Studies, Sociology, and Philosophy regarding the ethical implications of AI?
- iii) In what ways do Islamic moral philosophy and contemporary AI ethical frameworks converge or diverge in addressing issues of accountability, justice, and human welfare?
- iv) What strategies can be proposed for incorporating *Shari' ah*-compliant ethical guidelines into the development, regulation, and governance of AI technologies?

## Literature Review

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is rapidly reshaping the landscape of the social sciences by introducing advanced tools for data analysis, behavioral prediction, and automated decision-making. Its integration into key fields—such as education, psychology, governance, and media—offers unprecedented opportunities while simultaneously presenting ethical dilemmas. These challenges demand serious reflection, particularly through the lens of religious and moral worldviews such as those found in Islam.

In the realm of education, AI technologies facilitate personalized learning, automated assessments, and intelligent tutoring systems. These innovations have the potential to improve learning outcomes and increase student engagement through adaptive platforms. However, concerns have emerged regarding data privacy, surveillance, and the potential

depersonalization of the educational experience. From an Islamic standpoint, education is not solely about the transmission of information but also the cultivation of moral character and spiritual development, referred to as *ta'dīb* (Al-Attas, 1990, p. 13). Islamic pedagogy emphasizes holistic development, which current AI systems may fail to fully support.

In psychology, AI has enabled applications such as mental health diagnostics, emotion detection, and chatbot-based therapy. While these technologies can expand access to psychological support, they also raise questions about empathy, emotional authenticity, and human connection. Islamic psychology foregrounds the concept of *nafs* (soul/self) and emphasizes spiritual health alongside mental well-being (Haque, 2004, p. 358). As such, AI tools in mental health must be deployed cautiously, ensuring they align with Islamic understandings of human nature and the inner self.

In the field of governance, AI is increasingly used for predictive policing, administrative decision-making, resource management, and citizen surveillance. While these tools can promote efficiency and reduce corruption, they often lack transparency and are vulnerable to algorithmic bias. Islamic political ethics emphasize *'adl* (justice), *bayān* (clarity), and *shūrā* (consultation) as fundamental principles of leadership (Kamali, 2010, p. 77). Without ethical oversight, AI applications in governance risk undermining these values, especially when used to control or monitor populations unjustly.

Within the media, AI systems play a dominant role in shaping public discourse through content curation, algorithmic advertising, and synthetic media such as deepfakes. While these technologies improve personalization and user engagement, they also contribute to misinformation, echo chambers, and digital manipulation. Islamic ethics prioritize *ḥaqq* (truth) and *amānah fī al-kalām* (trustworthiness in speech), highlighting the responsibility of communicators to preserve truth and protect human dignity (Al-Qaradāwī, 1992, p. 95). Media manipulated by AI must therefore be scrutinized for its ethical implications, particularly in Islamic societies.

In summary, while AI holds great promise in enhancing the practice of the social sciences, its ethical consequences must not be overlooked. Within an Islamic moral framework, technology must not only serve utilitarian functions but also uphold higher ethical values such as justice, dignity, trust, and collective welfare. As Islamic teachings emphasize the integration of *dīn* (faith) with daily life, the ethical deployment of AI must align with both societal benefit and spiritual integrity.

## Islamic Moral Philosophy

Islamic moral philosophy derives from the Qur'an, *Sunnah*, and classical disciplines such as *Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, *ʿIlm al-Kalām*, and *Akhlāq*. It emphasizes individual accountability (*taklīf*) and collective welfare (*maṣlahah*), offering a comprehensive ethical framework for evaluating AI (Kamali, 2010, p. 45). These can be viewed under the following:

### 1. 'Adl (Justice)

Justice is a foundational value in Islamic ethics and is explicitly emphasized in the Qur'an: "*Indeed, Allah commands justice, excellence, and giving to relatives...*" (Qur'an 16:90). When applied to AI, justice entails ensuring fairness in automated decision-making, eliminating algorithmic bias, and protecting individuals from systemic discrimination. Any AI system that perpetuates inequality contradicts the Islamic imperative of justice (Kamali 49).

### 2. Amānah (Trust)

Amānah denotes trust, responsibility, and moral integrity. The Qur'an reflects this in the verse: "*Indeed, We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains...*" (Qur'an 33:72). Developers and users of AI technologies bear a moral duty to maintain transparency and safeguard the societal trust placed in them. The misuse of AI tools breaches this divine trust (Hashim and Yusoff 36).

### 3. Maṣlahah (Public Interest)

The principle of *maṣlahah* focuses on promoting communal welfare and preventing harm. Classical scholars like al-Ghazālī and al-Shāṭibī incorporated *maṣlahah* into the broader objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*), including the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property (Al-Ghazālī 112; Al-Shāṭibī 78). Thus, AI systems must be assessed not merely for efficiency but for their alignment with the greater public good.

### 4. Taklīf (Moral Responsibility)

*Taklīf* signifies legal and moral accountability, emphasizing that humans are ultimately responsible for their choices and actions. This concept challenges the delegation of ethical decisions to machines, especially in sensitive domains like criminal justice or healthcare. AI must remain under human oversight to ensure accountability and uphold moral integrity (Zainuddin et al. 94). In conclusion, these four ethical principles of justice, trust, public interest, and moral responsibility form a cohesive Islamic framework for evaluating the ethical implications of Artificial Intelligence. Unlike secular models that prioritize utility or autonomy, Islamic moral philosophy integrates divine accountability, collective welfare, and the preservation of human dignity. Therefore, its application in the field of AI not only ensures ethical compliance but also reaffirms the spiritual and moral aspirations of Muslim societies.

## Islamic Ethics and Technology: An Integrative Approach

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) continues to shape modern society, Muslim scholars are increasingly examining its implications through the lens of Islamic ethical thought. Although still an emerging field, a growing number of studies explore how Islamic principles can inform the governance, development, and use of AI and related technologies.

## 1. Islamic Ethics and Artificial Intelligence

Recent scholarship emphasizes the use of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*—the higher objectives of Islamic law as a foundational framework for AI ethics. Hashim and Yusoff argue that AI systems should be assessed not just on technical performance but also on their capacity to uphold the preservation of religion (*dīn*), life (*nafs*), intellect (*'aql*), lineage (*nasl*), and wealth (*māl*). They suggest that Islamic ethics offers a comprehensive moral guide that integrates spiritual values with societal well-being, often lacking in secular models (Hashim and Yusoff).

## 2. Human Dignity and Moral Accountability

Some scholars have expressed concern over the depersonalization of human interaction and the diminishing of moral responsibility as AI systems assume roles in critical sectors such as law, healthcare, and mental health. Zainuddin et al. warn that over-reliance on automation may compromise the Islamic principle of *taklīf* (moral accountability), especially as decision-making processes become less transparent and less human-centered (Zainuddin et al.).

## 3. Ethical Use of Data and Surveillance

The ethical handling of data is another key concern, particularly in Muslim-majority societies where surveillance technologies are often implemented without informed consent. Ahmad contends that such practices violate Islamic principles such as *amānah* (trust) and *ḥurmat al-khawṣiyyah* (privacy), especially when individuals lack control over how their personal data is used (Ahmad).

## 4. Role of Muslim Scholars and Institutions

There is an increasing call for '*ulamā'*' (Islamic legal scholars) to work closely with technologists, ethicists, and policymakers to develop Shariah-compliant AI frameworks. Al-Khalifa and Al-Rumaihi argue that such collaborations are essential to ensure that technological innovations remain aligned with the moral and spiritual well-being of Muslim societies. They stress the urgency of creating structured, value-driven discourse on AI rooted in Islamic ethics (Al-Khalifa and Al-Rumaihi).

## Theoretical Framework: Islamic Perspectives

Islamic ethical principles offer a comprehensive foundation for evaluating the moral dimensions of technological development, including artificial intelligence (AI). These principles are rooted in the *Sharī'ah*, interpreted through the Qur'an, Sunnah, and classical and modern Islamic scholarship.

### 1. Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah (The Objectives of Islamic Law)

The concept of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, formalized by scholars like al-Ghazālī and later developed by al-Shāṭibī, identifies five essential objectives: preservation of religion (*dīn*), life (*nafs*), intellect (*'aql*), lineage (*nasl*), and wealth (*māl*). These serve as ethical benchmarks in societal and technological matters. Technologies must uphold these values and promote *maṣlaḥah* (public good), avoiding any action that undermines them (al-Shāṭibī 70–73; Auda 24–27).

### 2. Maṣlaḥah (Public Interest)

As elaborated by Ibn 'Āshūr and other jurists, *maṣlaḥah* functions as a principle that allows jurists and policymakers to adopt ethical stances that protect communal well-being while remaining within the bounds of *Shari'ah* (Ibn 'Āshūr 45). Technological advancements are therefore ethical when they contribute to social welfare and minimize harm.

### 3. 'Adl (Justice) and Qist (Equity)

Justice is a cardinal value in Islam, emphasized repeatedly in the Qur'an (Qur'an 4:135). Technology must be evaluated on its ability to uphold fairness, reduce inequality, and ensure equitable access. Any digital system that perpetuates injustice is in conflict with Islamic teachings (Kamali 88–89).

### 4. Amānah (Trust and Responsibility)

The Qur'an presents humans as *khalīfah* (vicegerents) and stewards of the Earth (Qur'an 6:165). The concept of *amānah* therefore implies that data, AI systems, and communication tools must be handled with ethical responsibility and transparency (al-Qaraḍāwī 102–103).

### 5. Taklīf (Moral Responsibility and Accountability)

Islamic theology affirms that individuals are morally accountable for their actions (*taklīf*). This principle extends to both the creation and use of technology, holding developers and users accountable for harmful or unethical outcomes (al-Ghazālī 112; Auda 42).

### 6. Iḥsān (Excellence and Benevolence)

Beyond justice, Islam encourages *iḥsān*—doing good with excellence. In the realm of technology, this calls for compassionate design, accessibility, and proactive concern for user dignity, especially among marginalized populations (Kamali 95).

### 7. Lā Ḍarar wa Lā Ḍirār (No Harm and No Causing Harm)

This legal maxim, derived from a Prophetic tradition, prohibits both causing harm and reciprocating harm. It is widely applied in Islamic legal rulings and offers a critical standard for evaluating technological risks (Ibn Mājāh, Hadith 2341; al-Nawawī 124).

## 8. *Shūrā* (Consultation and Inclusivity)

The Qur'an instructs believers to conduct their affairs through mutual consultation (Qur'an 42:38). Ethical tech development must therefore be participatory and inclusive, involving diverse voices in decision-making processes (al-Qaraḏāwī 91).

## 9. *Himāyah al-'Aql* (Protection of Intellect)

The safeguarding of human intellect is one of the *darūriyyāt*. Technologies should support mental clarity, cognitive development, and critical thought rather than impair them through manipulation, misinformation, or addiction (al-Shāṭibī 68; Auda 33).

## Identifying Research Gaps

Despite this growing interest, several key research gaps remain that this study aims to address:

### Contextualizing Islamic Ethics in the Social Sciences

While some scholars have proposed general ethical frameworks based on *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, few have linked these principles to practical applications of AI in education, psychology, governance, and media, key domains within the social sciences. Most existing works are theoretical or jurisprudential, lacking real-time analysis of how AI affects human behavior and social institutions.

### Limited Empirical Studies within Muslim Contexts

Much of the literature remains conceptual and lacks empirical grounding, particularly within Sub-Saharan Africa. In Nigeria, where Islamic and social science traditions are both strong, little is known about how scholars and students perceive the ethical implications of AI. This research seeks to fill that gap through qualitative data collected via surveys and interviews.

### Underrepresentation of Islamic Scholars in AI Ethics Discourse

Although Islamic moral philosophy offers rich ethical insight, Islamic scholars remain underrepresented in global AI ethics conversations. This exclusion often leads to misinterpretations or neglect of Islamic perspectives in policy and technical design processes. Islamic ethical principles offer a comprehensive foundation for evaluating the moral dimensions of technological development, including artificial intelligence (AI). These principles are rooted in the Sharī'ah, as interpreted through the Qur'an, *Sunnah*, and both classical and contemporary Islamic scholarship.

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#### 2. *Maṣlaḥah* (Public Interest)

As elaborated by Ibn 'Āshūr and other jurists, *maṣlaḥah* functions as a principle that allows policymakers and scholars to adopt ethical positions that protect communal well-being while remaining within the bounds of Sharī'ah (Ibn 'Āshūr, 2006, p. 45). Technological advancements are therefore considered ethical when they contribute to social welfare and minimize harm.

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The protection of human intellect is one of the essential *ḍarūriyyāt* in Islamic law. Technologies should support mental clarity, cognitive development, and critical thinking rather than impair these faculties through manipulation, misinformation, or addiction (Al-Shāṭibī, 1997, p. 68; Auda, 2008, p. 33).

## Gaps in Cross-Disciplinary Dialogue

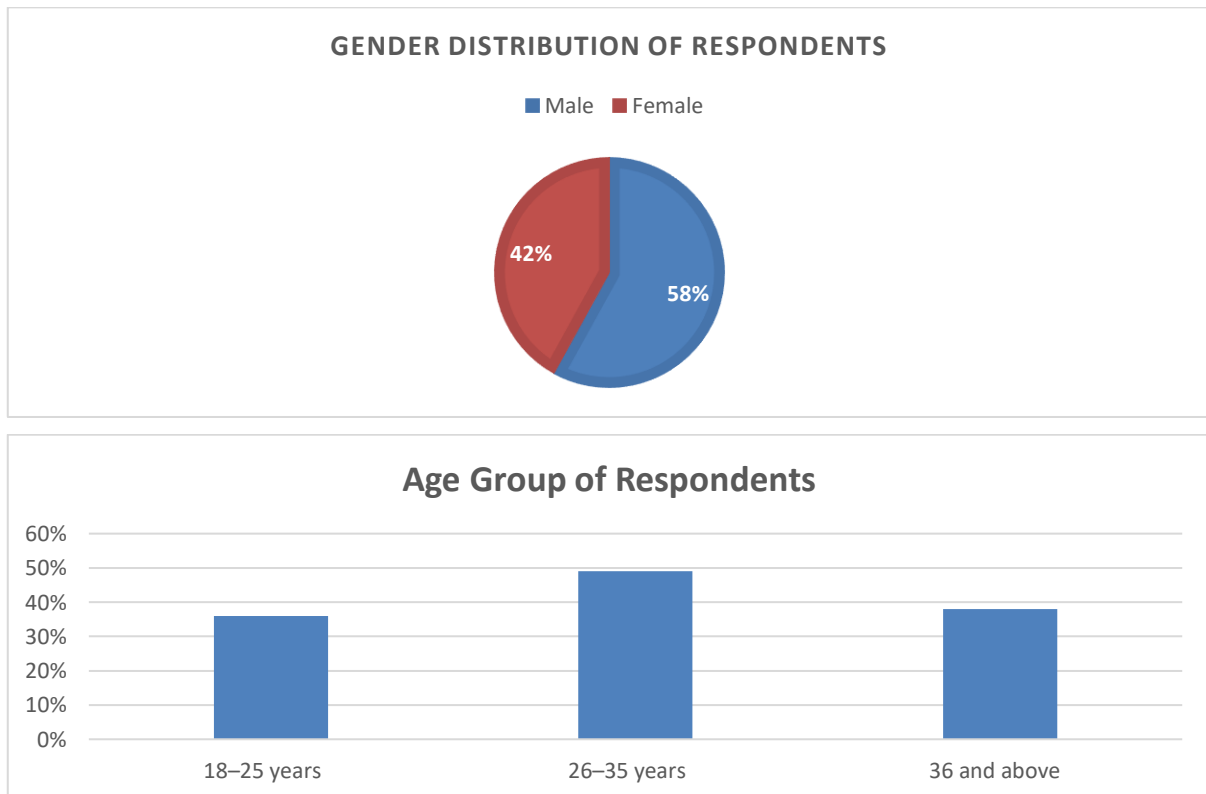
There is a notable lack of sustained collaboration between Islamic scholars, technologists, and social scientists. While AI researchers may lack awareness of Islamic ethical concerns, Islamic ethicists may not fully grasp the technical and societal impacts of AI systems. Addressing this divide requires deliberate cross-disciplinary engagement.

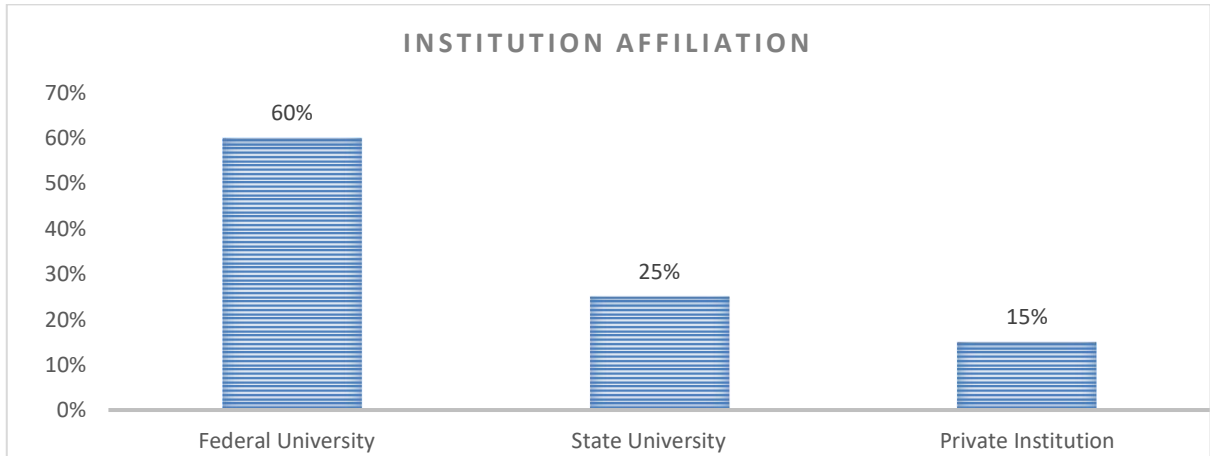
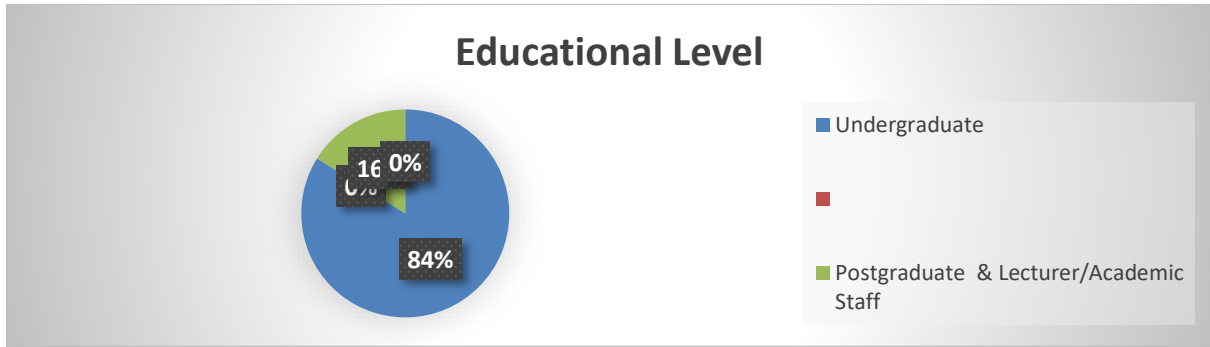
## Scarcity of Policy and Institutional Frameworks

Very few studies provide concrete policy recommendations or institutional models that integrate Islamic ethics into AI governance. The absence of such frameworks continues to hinder efforts to align technological innovation with Islamic moral standards.

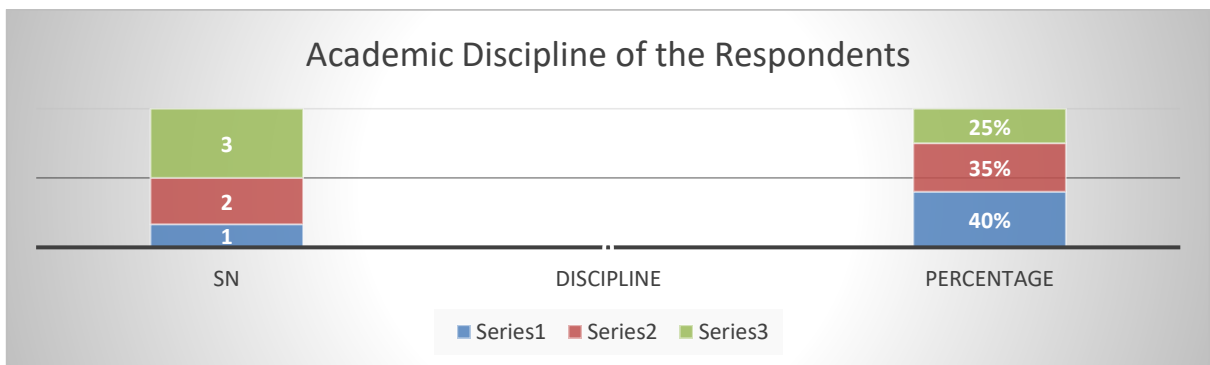
## Data Analysis

### SECTION A BIO-DATA OF RESPONDENTS

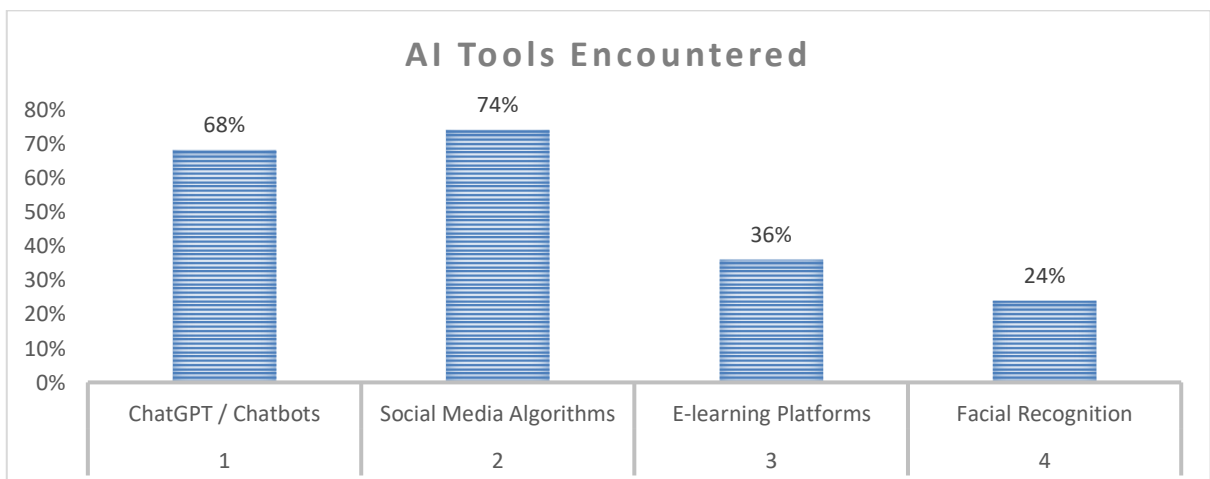


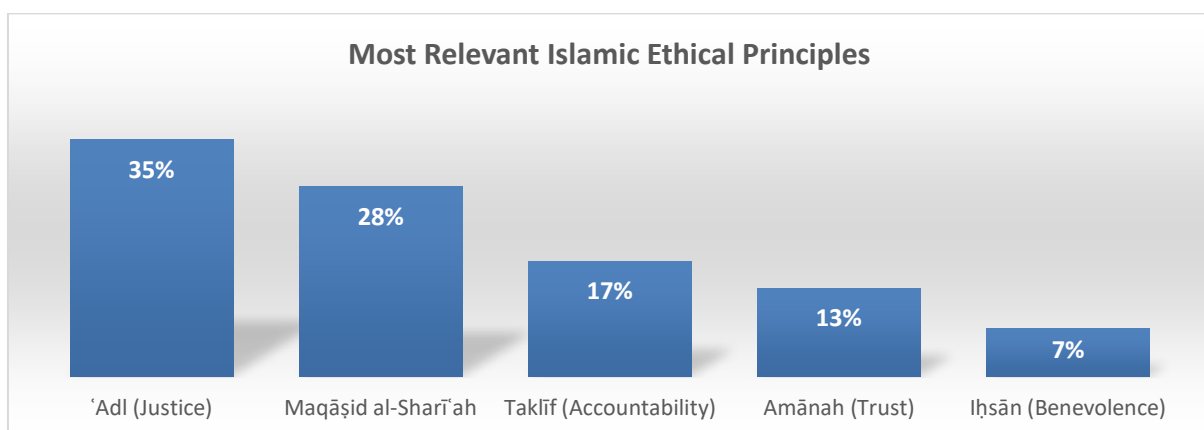
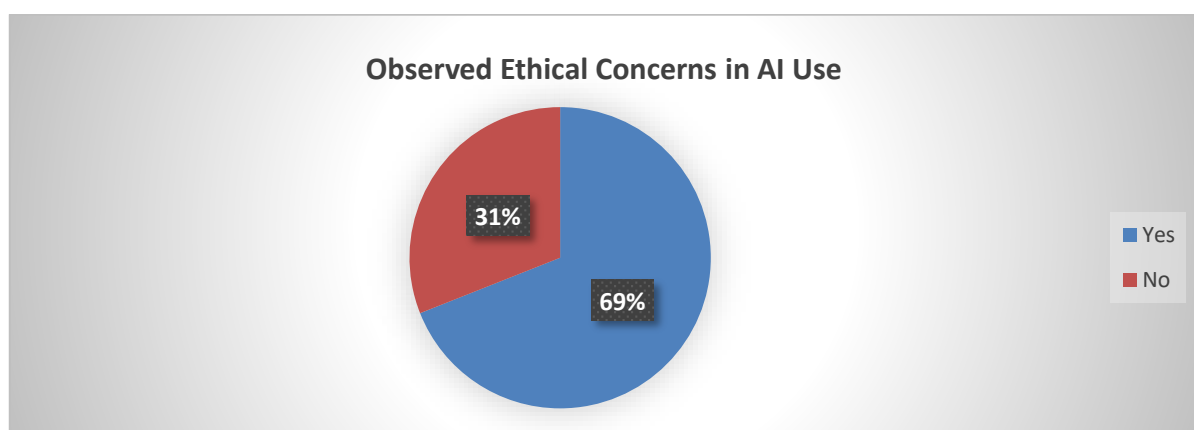
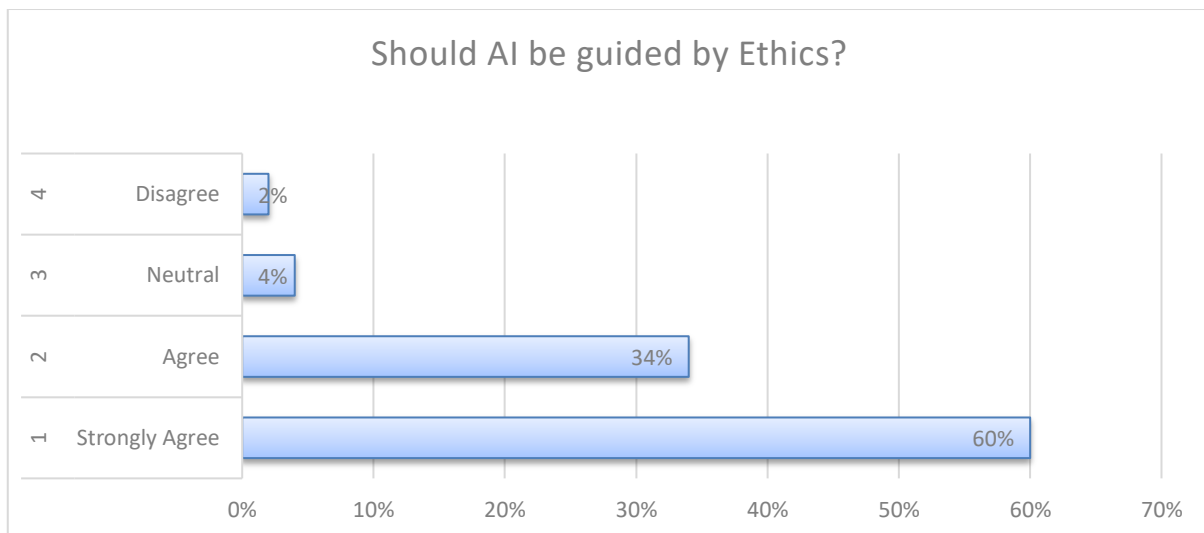


### SECTION B



**Disciplines= Islamic Studies, Sociology and Philosophy**





## Discussion of Findings

The largest proportion of respondents were from Islamic Studies (40%), followed by Sociology (35%) and Philosophy (25%). This distribution is significant because it reflects broad engagement with both religious ethical frameworks and human-centered disciplines, which are critical in shaping normative discussions around artificial intelligence (AI). Scholars argue that such interdisciplinarity is essential for developing a balanced ethical discourse on technology (Al-Attas, n.d., p. 17; Yudkowsky, n.d., p. 10).

Additionally, respondents reported the highest interaction with social media algorithms (74%) and chatbots such as ChatGPT (68%), followed by e-learning platforms (36%) and facial recognition technologies (24%). This indicates substantial exposure to AI tools that influence information dissemination, identity recognition, and learning processes. From an Islamic perspective, these technologies raise ethical concerns related to surveillance, misinformation, and human dignity, particularly when their use lacks transparency (Ibrahim, n.d., p. 45). The teachings of the Prophet Muhammad

emphasize the protection of personal dignity and truthfulness, aligning closely with contemporary concerns over AI misuse (Kamali, n.d., p. 124).

Furthermore, a combined 94% of respondents (60% strongly agree and 34% agree) believe that AI should be guided by ethical principles. This overwhelming consensus highlights the moral urgency of developing AI systems that preserve human rights, accountability, and fairness. Islamic moral philosophy reinforces this position through the principle of *taklīf* (moral responsibility), which holds that all actions including technological innovation—are accountable before God and society (Al-Faruqi, n.d., p. 65).

In addition, 69% of respondents reported observing ethical concerns in AI use, including bias, lack of consent, and intrusive data collection. These concerns are consistent with scholarly critiques that emphasize AI's potential to amplify injustice, particularly in under-regulated environments (Boddington, n.d., p. 39). From an Islamic ethical standpoint, such practices may violate the principles of *ʿadl* (justice) and *amānah* (trust), which are central to Islamic moral thought (Sardar, n.d., p. 82).

When asked which Islamic ethical principles are most relevant to guiding AI, respondents identified *ʿadl* (justice) as the most significant (35%), followed by *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* (higher objectives of Islamic law) at 28%, *taklīf* (accountability) at 17%, *amānah* (trust) at 13%, and *ihsān* (benevolence) at 7%.

This ranking suggests a strong preference for principles that promote fairness and public welfare, aligning with global AI ethics frameworks that emphasize non-maleficence, transparency, and inclusivity (Floridi et al., n.d., p. 693). The prominence of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* is particularly significant, as it provides a holistic, goal-oriented framework for evaluating technologies in relation to the preservation of life, intellect, dignity, and faith (Kamali, n.d., p. 130).

## Conclusion

In Islam, intellectual integrity and critical thinking are protected and thus, prevents misuse of technology to spread misinformation or manipulate thought. In essence, this presupposes that, application of *Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah* in relation to technological advancements are not evaluated solely on utility or innovation, but on their capacity to promote human welfare (*maṣlaḥah*) and prevent harm (*mafsadah*). It goes further by offering a proactive, principled vision that upholds dignity, justice, and social balance in the digital age i.e. allows for *ijtihād* (independent legal reasoning) to address new ethical dilemmas not directly mentioned in classical texts thereby making it particularly effective for emerging fields like Artificial Intelligence, biotechnology, and data ethics. These findings show that stakeholders across Islamic Studies, Sociology, and Philosophy in Nigeria strongly support the ethical regulation of AI technologies. There is widespread awareness of the risks associated with AI, and a clear consensus that Islamic ethical principles, in particular justice, accountability, and the public good. Thus, Islamic moral philosophy can contribute significantly to the global conversation on ethical AI governance, particularly within contexts shaped by faith, culture, and community.

## Recommendations

In light of the findings and the ethical concerns raised regarding Islamic moral philosophy and technological innovation, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i) There is the need Islamic ethical guideline for the development of Artificial Intelligence that is informed by the principles of *Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah*, *taklīf*, and *masʿūliyyah* that will enable AI systems operate within the bounds of justice, accountability, and human dignity.
- ii) The need for the training programs and workshops between Islamic scholars (*ʿUlamāʾ*), computer scientists, ethicists, and sociologists, so as to bridge the gap between technical expertise and moral reasoning which will of course, foster more ethically robust innovations.
- iii) The need for the establishment of dedicated institutions and think-tanks that will contribute (from Islamic perspectives) to global conversations on AI ethics by collaborating with international bodies to ensure that Islamic values are considered in shaping the moral and legal planning governing emerging technologies.

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